



The Episcopal Diocese of Long Island

BROOKLYN • QUEENS • NASSAU • SUFFOLK

Guidelines for Worship

Nov. 23, 2020

The Diocese of Long Island is currently in Phase C. Churches are open for public worship and Holy Eucharist following these guidelines:

While the celebration of Holy Communion is permitted at this time, the distribution of wine in any form is still prohibited. As a part of the Eucharistic action the celebrant should consecrate enough wine for themselves to consume on behalf of the gathered community. Distribution of the wine through individual and/or prepackaged cups is not permitted in this diocese.

- The Celebrant must wear a mask at all times.
- A distance of 6 ft must be maintained by the altar party as much as possible.
- Sanitize hands before and after touching the host and distributing Communion.
- The Celebrant must take care to not touch the hands of the communicants.
- For more detailed information, an instructional video may be found here: <https://vimeo.com/461640873/7454af0f09>

No parish *must* celebrate Holy Eucharist and the final decision whether to reinstate regular distribution of communion rests with the clergy-in-charge of each worshipping community. Services of the Daily Office, both virtually and in-person, remain options for regular worship for those congregations not yet ready to safely resume services of Holy Eucharist.

The congregational capacity must be no more than 33% of the maximum occupancy for a particular area for services occurring indoor; or no more than 50 people for services occurring outdoor.

We recommend that parishes provide a reservation system to make sure that worshipers are not turned away at the door because the space is at capacity.

A mandatory health screening assessment (e.g. questionnaire, temperature check) for all liturgical leaders (ushers, greeters, musicians, acolytes, etc. but not attendees) must be implemented for each service, asking about COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days, positive COVID-19 test in past 14 days, and/or close contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days. Responses must be reviewed and such review must be documented. (A sample questionnaire can be found [here](#).)

Congregational and choral singing is still considered to be risky during this phase. Singers should maintain a minimum distance of 25 feet from other attendees.

Prayer Books and Hymnals should be removed from the worship space. One-time-use paper bulletins are recommended.

Social distancing of 6 feet must be maintained at all times.

Gathering duration must last less than one hour for all in-person gatherings in our buildings.

Face masks required at all times.

Contact Tracing is essential.

No use of closed HVAC systems (including fans). Open windows for fresh air where possible.

The offertory is still an important element of our worship. A stationary offertory plate should be set out to receive offerings. It is recommended that parishes also offer a method of online giving.

No social gatherings that include food and beverage. No in-person coffee hour until Phase D.

No nursery care or in-person Sunday School until Phase D.

If someone who has worshiped with your parish tests positive for COVID-19, immediately notify state and local health departments and cooperate with contact tracing efforts, including notification of potential contacts who had close contact with the person, while maintaining confidentiality as required by state and federal law and regulations.

Non-religious gatherings (such as 12-step groups) are permitted as long they remain in compliance with maximum occupancy, physical distancing, and face covering requirements.

It is highly recommended that all clergy and regular liturgical leaders are tested for COVID-19 regularly (every 2 weeks) for the safety of all.

For more resources and information, including a template for a health screening questionnaire and a proper hygiene poster, visit:

<https://forward.ny.gov/religious-and-funeral-services-ny-forward-guidelines>