



DIOCESE *of* GAYLORD

The new [Gatherings and Face Mask Order](#) goes into effect on March 5, 2021 at 12:01 am and the order will remain in effect through April 19, 2021. This document will replace all others on the diocesan website; please disregard previous notices.

Dispensation from Mass

- On November 9, 2020 the general dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation in the Diocese of Gaylord was extended by Bishop Hurley until further notice. The dispensation is in place for anyone who needs to stay at home to protect the common good, themselves and others can do so in good conscience.
- The recommendation to stay home is for people who are considered vulnerable due to age or have [underlying health conditions](#).
 - If someone is sick, please encourage them to stay home.

Church Capacity

- Priests are allowed to admit the number they can safely accommodate while maintaining the required sanitizing; social distancing (6-foot minimum); and the required use of face masks.
- Church seating capacity is no longer limited to the previous 25% capacity.
- Highly touched surfaces are to be disinfected after each liturgy and hand sanitizers are available and used by all. Misting is not required.

Social Distancing and Group Sizes

- Social distancing must be maintained at all times except when brief proximity is required because of the activity, e.g., performing certain ministries or receiving the sacraments.
- Only those from the same household may sit together; everyone else should maintain 6 feet of distance in every direction for other individuals not from their household.
 - The utilization of signs, tape, or ropes should be used to help keep the 6 feet of distance while in lines and for seating.
- While social distancing must be maintained, there is no limit on attendance (percentage or fixed capacity) for indoor worship.

Non-liturgical Gathering Guidelines (face masks and social distancing required)

- Indoor gatherings at non-residential venues are permitted with no more than 25 persons gathered.
- Outdoor gatherings at non-residential venues are permitted with 300 or fewer persons gathered.

Facial Coverings

- [Face masks](#) are required for participation in all Masses and parish events. This requirement is following CDC [guidelines](#).
 - Masks should cover a person's nose and mouth and be secure under their chin. It should also fit snugly against the sides of the face.
 - As a rule, priests in the sanctuary should not wear facial coverings, with the exception of when distributing Holy Communion.
 - Have face masks available, for those who may forget theirs, at the entrance to the Church.
 - **For the purpose of the March 2, 2021 Order the following are not considered "face masks": Scarves, ski masks, balaclavas, neck gaiters, plastic masks, and chin shields.**

General Precautions

- Holy Water and baptismal fonts are to remain empty.
 - Holy Water can be made available in other ways, like by bottles/containers brought in by parishioners. The "Order for the Blessing of Holy Water outside Mass" may be found in the Book of Blessings.
- Use ushers to dismiss the congregation beginning with the back of the church, row by row moving towards the front.
- Lay greeters should maintain a safe social distance from parishioners.
- Priest should maintain a safe social distance from parishioners if they choose to greet them before and/or after Mass, which we would encourage them to do.
- Invite parishioners to donate online or place their envelope in a basket upon entering or leaving the Church. Do not pass a collection basket.
- There should be no physical contact between parishioners of separate households (e.g. parishioners should not shake hands for the Sign of Peace nor should they hold hands during the Our Father).
- Have hand sanitizer and masks available for parishioners to use upon entering the church and encourage them to use their own prior to receiving Communion.

Music

- The parts of the Mass that may be sung by all: Psalm response, Alleluia Verse, the Holy Holy, the Mystery of Faith, the Great Amen, and the Lamb of God.
- The Gloria, Creed and Our Father should not be sung.
- A cantor or other singer may sing a hymn or special music at places in the liturgy.
- Masks and social distancing should be followed by musicians and choir.

Cleaning Requirements

- All drinking fountains should be turned off, wrapped in plastic, and have a sign placed on them stating *Out of Order*.

- All hymnals and re-useable worship materials should be removed from pews and gathering spaces.
- Bulletins may be available after Mass; ushers should not pass them out. In keeping with social distancing, place a stack of bulletins where parishioners may take one themselves. The same stack of bulletins should not be set out at back-to-back Masses.
- Ushers, church personnel, and/or volunteers MUST wipe down frequently touched surfaces after each Mass. The surfaces that require the additional cleaning include but are not limited to the following:
 - The tops and endcaps of pews, where people are most likely to place their hands.
 - Bathrooms.
 - Door handles and door push plates.
- Misting/spraying/fogging is not required.
- Follow the recommendations on the cleaning product used in your church to ensure germs are killed.
- For additional cleaning information please see the [CDC guidelines](#) on disinfecting.

Lent and Holy Week Regulations, 2021

- Please see [memo](#) from Beth Hick, Director, Office of Worship dated February 11, 2021, on the diocesan website.

The Holy Eucharist

Social Distancing

- Ministers should maintain proper social distancing protocol in the sacristy and during the procession and recession.
- Consideration should be given to whether the procession and recession routes allow ministers to maintain the proper social distancing protocols from the congregation.

Ritual Adaptations

- A server should not hold a book for the celebrant at the chair; the missal could be placed on a lectern at the chair.
- The presentation of wine and hosts may resume during the Offertory. The members of the assembly who will present the gifts are to be wearing masks and must sanitize their hands before picking up the vessels and presenting them.
- Interactions among ministers at the altar should be minimized.
- A deacon may stand beside the celebrant to elevate the chalice at the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer.
- The invitation to the Sign of Peace and the Sign of Peace itself are omitted until further notice.

Distribution of Holy Communion

- The distribution of the Precious Blood is suspended at this time. Please make special arrangements for parishioners who may not be able to receive the host.
- As often as necessary the priest should instruct the faithful, either at the beginning of Mass or at the conclusion of his homily, as to the appropriate distribution of Holy Communion.
- The distribution of Holy Communion should take place in the following way:
 - Communicants should know how to maintain proper social distancing in line when approaching to receive Holy Communion.
 - Holy Communion may not be distributed with gloves or by an instrument and may not be received by a gloved hand.
 - The minister of Holy Communion must wear an appropriate face covering and sanitize his/her hands immediately before and after distributing Holy Communion.
 - A small table/stand should be placed at the Communion station with an unfolded corporal, an ablution cup/dish, and hand sanitizer in the instance that contact is made with the communicant's hand or tongue.
 - When a minister senses contact with a communicant's hand or mouth, he/she should:
 - set the ciborium or paten on the corporal,
 - Purify his/her fingers in the ablution cup, then
 - Use hand sanitizer and wait for his/her hands to dry,
 - Continue with distribution.

Sacraments

Infant Baptism

- May be celebrated during or outside of Mass.
- Holy Water fonts to remain unfilled.
- Baptism is by pouring; fresh water is to be used for each baptism. (No immersion.)
- With the exception of the infant all participants must wear masks and practice social distancing.

Weddings

- Wedding Masses are able to continue following Mass protocols.
- The priest in the sanctuary nor the couple have to wear face coverings; all other participants, as required, must wear face masks.
- Celebrations/luncheons are not permitted in parish halls or gathering spaces **due to capacity limits and other restrictions.**

Outdoor Weddings:

- Outdoor weddings are not permitted.

Anointing of the Sick

- Anointing of the Sick is to be celebrated individually.
- Everyone, including the priest, is to wear a face covering during the celebration of the sacrament.
- The celebrant must practice hand hygiene before laying on of hands and after anointing.

Funerals

- Funeral Masses are able to continue following Mass protocols.
- Funeral luncheons are not permitted in parish halls or gathering spaces **due to capacity limits and other restrictions.**

Mass Outdoors

- Outdoor masses are permitted, at the priest's discretion.
 - Masses must be held on parish grounds.
 - Outdoor Masses in which people remain in the vehicles are prohibited.

Reconciliation

- Individual confessions are to be encouraged and may continue.
- Communal penance services with individual absolution may continue.
- Mask and social distancing guidelines must be followed.

Wedding, Confirmation, First Holy Communion and other liturgical rehearsals

- **If a rehearsal is necessary, it should be brief and follow Non-Liturgical Gathering Guidelines.**

Devotional events

- Churches should remain open for private prayer according to their regular schedules following sanitation, social distancing, and face mask guidelines.
- Adoration chapels may be open following sanitation, social distancing, and face mask guidelines.

Children's Liturgy

- **Remains suspended through the remainder of this academic year.**

Faith Formation and Sacramental Prep

- Faith Formation and Sacramental Prep for K-8 Grade is allowed to be held in person as of October of 2020, following school protocols.
- Faith Formation for high school students is allowed to be held in person as of January 4, 2021, following school protocols.
- Faith Formation and RCIA for adults is allowed as of January 18, 2021, following college/university protocols.

Parish Hall Rentals

- Due to capacity limits and other restrictions, rentals are not permitted at this time.

Parish Festivals/Carnivals/Picnics

- Outdoor parish gatherings are permitted under the March 5, 2021 *Gatherings and Face Mask Order* following the Non-Liturgical Gathering Guidelines (above).
- Consumption of food/beverage is permitted only while seated and only in designated areas.

Bake Sale/Craft Fair/Public Lectures

- Activities are permitted in a place of worship; but, are still subject to the *Gatherings and Face Mask Order's* mask requirements, social distancing, and capacity limits.

Fish Fries

- Dinners are to be packaged individually and served in to-go containers with no eat-in service.
- All volunteers must wear appropriate personal protection equipment at all times and complete a COVID-19 symptom questionnaire and have their temperature taken prior to entering the facility. If anyone is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms they should be asked not to volunteer.
- The parish must also keep a record of volunteer names, phone numbers, and dates worked to assist with contact tracing should it be needed.
- Social distancing should be maintained by the kitchen staff and those in the take-out line(s).

Blood Drives & CPR Classes

- With the need for blood being critical, parishes may move forward with holding blood drives. This is one way we can offer support to our communities. All safety precautions from the local health departments and blood banks must be followed. The space used during the blood drive must be appropriately sanitized before and after the event.
- CPR classes are permitted under the March 5, 2021 *Gatherings and Face Mask Order*. The space used during the class must be appropriately sanitized before and after the event.

BINGO

- While it is allowed under the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) *Gatherings and Face Mask Order* issued on January 18, 2021, per the January 22, 2021 update from the diocesan office, BINGO remains suspended until further notice in all church facilities.