



Epiphany Parish – Walpole, Massachusetts

COVID-19 Re-Gathering Information AMENDMENT 10/15/20

Our Parish Regathering Plans need to be amended to reflect the guidance provided as outlined in *Journey by Stages Expanded Guidelines for Stage Two: Holy Communion, Pastoral Visits, Holy Baptism* published by the Episcopal Dioceses in Massachusetts on August 6, 2020.

All protocols outlined in the Epiphany Parish Regathering Plan adopted on August 13, 2020, and as amended on 10/3/20, remain in effect unless stated below provided they are in accordance with the most current guidance from our Bishops and directives of the Massachusetts Governor's Office, including current attendance limitations. The Governor's directives, including building capacity percentages, are subject to change at any time.

Worship Information

--During stage 2, Holy Communion is allowed following all restrictions and guidance provided in *Journey by Stages Expanded Guidelines for Stage Two: Holy Communion, Pastoral Visits, Holy Baptism*, including:

- Communion will be distributed as wafer only. Wine will not be distributed.
- Eucharistic ministers will serve communicants at their seats to reduce movement.
- congregants will keep their masks on while receiving communion and only remove their mask to consume once the Eucharistic ministers and all other congregants are at least 6ft in distance.
- Loose wafers from vessels that have been used for the distribution of Communion will not be reserved for use at subsequent services.
- Individual Communion packets prepared for visits to those unable to be present may be placed in the aumbry or another appropriate place for reservation of the sacrament.
- All hygiene, sanitation, and preparation guidelines in *Journey by Stages Expanded Guidelines for Stage Two: Holy Communion, Pastoral Visits, Holy Baptism* must be followed.

Small Groups and Community Groups

--At this time, parish small groups, Christian formation events, and fellowship events, besides worship, may occur either virtually or outdoors with the following restrictions:

- At this time, indoor in-person parish events are not to be held.
- Masks must be worn at all times, even at outdoor events.

- Social distancing of 6ft or more between households must be enforced.
- High Risk individuals are encouraged to participate virtually. Virtual opportunities are encouraged allow for everyone to be able to participate.
- Attendance limitations set by the Governor of Massachusetts must be enforced at all times.
- All small groups and events must have permission from the parish office prior to holding an outside gathering.
- The date of the event, along with name and phone number of each participant who was present must be given to the parish office immediately after the event. Records will be kept in our office for 2 months to help with any contact tracing, if necessary.
- If restrooms are used, each group is responsible for cleaning the restroom afterwards with CDC approved wipes or other cleaning product.
- All surfaces (tables, chairs, objects) used must be cleaned with a CDC approved wipe or cleaning product before and after each gathering.
- Objects will not be shared between members of different households.
- Anyone who enters the church building must sign-in at the door with their name, date, phone number, and times entering and exiting the building.

--Youth Group may be held on the Epiphany Property, or at another property, as long as the guidance for Youth Gatherings outlined in *Journey by Stages: Regathering in Stage Two Meetings among participants in youth groups in the Diocese of Massachusetts* is followed.

- All protocols for small group and event meetings (above) must be followed.
- All Youth and Parents/ Guardians of youth who will participate in in-person, outdoor Youth events must sign the Regathering Covenant for Youth and Parents/Guardians provided by our Diocese on August 6, 2020.

Pastoral Care and Life Events

--In stage 2, Baptism is allowed following all restrictions in accordance with the guidance provided in *Journey by Stages Expanded Guidelines for Stage Two: Holy Communion, Pastoral Visits, Holy Baptism*, and the 'Worship Information' of the *Epiphany Parish Regathering Plans* including:

- Baptism, especially when a young child or a person who is at higher risk is to be baptized or is among the parents and sponsors, is to be administered apart from large public services of worship.
- If Baptism is administered apart from the principal service, a small group of persons may be invited to represent the congregation.
- Those preparing for the rite are to wear masks at all times and wash hands with soap and water, or apply hand sanitizer immediately before the preparation.
- The font and any vessels to hold water and chrism are to be cleansed and disinfected immediately prior to the liturgy.
- A vessel, such as a small ladle, shell or bowl for pouring water over the baptismal candidate, is to be available.
- Adequate space for physical distancing between households is necessary. Multiple

baptisms are discouraged during the pandemic.

-- If more than one person is to be baptized, the celebrant and assisting ministers are to wash their hands with soap and water or apply hand sanitizer immediately before and after each baptism. Instructions for the Baptism

--Participants are to maintain six feet of physical distancing between households throughout the rite.

--All participants except those under age two (and, at the discretion of parent or guardian, those under age five) are to wear masks throughout the rite.

--A parent or caregiver is to hold an infant candidate at all times during the rite.

--During the Presentation and Examination of the Candidate, the Baptismal Covenant and the Prayers for the Candidate, the celebrant and assisting ministers are to stand at least six feet apart from others and speak at a low volume to reduce aerosols.

--All who speak, including sponsors and the congregation, are to speak in a low voice throughout the rite to minimize aerosols.

--At the Blessing of the Water, an assisting minister may pour water into the font.

--The celebrant is not to touch the water during the Blessing.

--At the time of the baptism, water is poured over the head of the candidate using a bowl, shell or ladle. If more than one baptism is to take place, a separate basin should be used to catch the excess water.

--If an infant or young child is to be baptized, a parent or caregiver holds the child during the baptism.

--The celebrant and any assisting baptismal ministers are to wear a mask throughout the baptism and avoid breathing directly on the candidate or sponsors.

--At the laying-on-of-hands and anointing with chrism, the person performing the anointing is to touch the forehead of the candidate only briefly. If multiple persons are to receive the laying-on-of-hands and anointing, hand sanitizer is to be used between each laying-on-of-hands and before touching the chrism again.

--Those gathered welcome the newly baptized in a low voice but may offer vigorous applause or other gestures of welcome that do not require touch.

--Names of participants, dates, and times of visits will be recorded and kept in our parish office for 2 months to help with contact tracing, if needed.

--All hygiene, sanitation, and preparation guidelines in *Journey by Stages Expanded Guidelines for Stage Two: Holy Communion, Pastoral Visits, Holy Baptism* must be followed.

--Home Communion Visits are allowed following all restrictions in accordance with the guidance provided in *Journey by Stages Expanded Guidelines for Stage Two: Holy Communion, Pastoral Visits, Holy Baptism*, including:

--Those who are at higher risk for serious complications from COVID-19 are strongly encouraged to remain safer at home and to refrain from attending in-person worship services or church activities.

--Until the threat posed by COVID-19 is truly gone, we discourage pastoral visits at homes,

hospitals or nursing care centers except when it is deemed pastorally necessary.

--Pastoral and eucharistic visits are to be kept to 10 minutes or fewer.

-- Pastoral visitors are to observe the protocols of the hospital or care facility at all times.

--Pastoral visitors are to maintain physical distancing, wear a mask at all times and use hand sanitizer before and after each visit. Physical touch in these settings is to be avoided.

--The eucharistic visitor is to bring the greetings of the congregation and offer prayer for the communicant.

-- If desired, individual Communion packets with consecrated bread may be delivered from or obtained at the church for consumption at home during a livestreamed or pre-recorded broadcast of the liturgy.

--The eucharistic visitor is to wash hands with soap and water or apply hand sanitizer immediately upon entering the room.

--The eucharistic visitor is to wear a mask (and other personal protective equipment, as required) at all times during the visit.

--The eucharistic visitor is to maintain six feet of distance except when placing the Communion packet on the table and/or administering Communion. Contact closer than six feet is to be kept at an absolute minimum.

--All hygiene, sanitation, and preparation guidelines in *Journey by Stages Expanded Guidelines for Stage Two: Holy Communion, Pastoral Visits, Holy Baptism* must be followed.