



Diocese of Easton

To: Clergy and Lay Leadership

From: Bishop and Standing Committee Pastoral Advisory

Date: May 13, 2021

Re: Amendment to Diocesan COVID 19 Protocols/Guidelines

In response to the recent Press Conference held by the Governor of Maryland, Mr. Larry Hogan on May 12, 2021, in which he directed that all public places be open to full capacity without the restriction of social distancing. It has been the practice of the diocese throughout the pandemic to confirm to directives sent out by Center for Disease Control (CDC), State of Maryland and local jurisdictions on the eastern shore. The following advisory to the diocese is effective Sunday, May 16, 2021:

- Our churches are advised to comply with the governor's recent directive
- Churches may rearrange their pews/chairs to pre-covid seating protocol
- Masks are to be worn *indoors* in the sanctuary and parish hall at all times
- Holy Communion to maintain the current COVID 19 protocol, communion in one kind (bread). Members may approach the altar to receive communion as per pre-covid protocol
- Regular sanitization in between services may be dispensed
- Use of facility by our ministry partners is permitted, *indoor* masking protocol to be observed
- Sharing the Peace is permitted but minimization of physical contact should be observed
- Outside activities on the campus may dispense with masking protocols
- At all times remain vigilant. Continue to advise members to remain at home if they experience any symptoms associated with the virus.
- Continue to advocate for full vaccination of everyone.

The above advisory is sent out immediately to comply with the governor's directive and give parishes the opportunity to arrange their sanctuary to accommodate more in person worship attendance this Sunday, Ascension Sunday, which is usually observed as a high feast day in our liturgical tradition.

A more elaborate advisory covering other aspects of our common life will be sent out before Pentecost Sunday, May 23. The bishop is inviting clergy and lay leaders to a zoom gathering on Tuesday, May 18, at 11:00 a.m. to discuss the diocese's response to the other prohibitions in the Diocesan Protocol. The co-chairs of the task force have been briefed and add their support to this current pastoral advisory. They are looking forward to Tuesday's gathering.