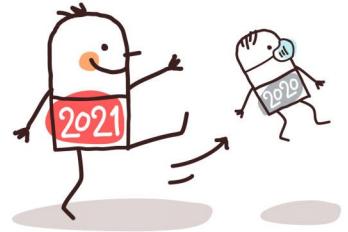




# Your Close Attention, Please: Easing Pandemic Restrictions

Updates effective Wednesday, June 9, 2021

Based on city and state guidance and my conversation yesterday with our stalwart Ascension pandemic task force members, masks will now be optional at Ascension *for all who are fully vaccinated, effective immediately. This includes those taking part in the mass — ministers, musicians and those in the pews. A few caveats:*



- **Those not fully vaccinated are asked to remain masked.**
- **Those vaccinated are welcomed to continue masking, regardless of the reason(s) for doing so.**
- **All are asked to exercise continued sensible health/safety measures in all contexts.**

**Now what?** This is the fourth week that new/revised guidance has been provided with regard to easing pandemic restrictions. Changes already in place (partly edited) may be reviewed below and on the back of this sheet. We are far from 'returning to normal.' Matters that seem simple from a distance and without involvement are often more complicated for those of us in the sanctuary, choir loft, parish offices and, newly, providing a new ministry by way of technology. Matters noted below are among those under consideration but with regard to which we are not yet able to implement changes. If you can offer your time and talents during this time, please be in touch with me or other leaders. Thank you again for your attention, patience and help. - Fr. Patrick Raymond+, Rector

## Under continuing review in anticipation of further changes (partial list only):

- If/when to add a 2nd Sunday mass.
- Restoring Solemn High Masses.
- In-person coffee hours are being resumed subject to volunteer leadership and compliance with safe gathering and serving guidelines.
- Virtual coffee hours are phasing out. What can replace them for continued remote connections?
- Daily Office—@ Ascension or continued remote?
- Hearing Assistance Units—awaiting volunteer coordinator and training
- Sunday nursery care.
- Technology matters: volunteer help; what services to live-stream; remote lectors (or not).

Updates effective Wednesday, June 2, 2021

- **Pre-registration online is suspended** for now, effective immediately. We will discontinue the system that has been in place since September 2020. However ...

**Registration continues:** *in person, in the narthex, when you arrive for mass.*

**Members and regular newcomers will be placed on a pre-printed checklist** – no form to fill out; an usher will check off your name as you arrive, whenever you are here for a mass.

**Those not on the members/regulars list** are asked to provide name(s) and contact info.

**Clergy, lay ministers, musicians, tech ministers and ushers assigned for a mass no longer need to register for that mass.** We already have contact information and know who is scheduled for what masses.

**We will continue this registration practice through June**, in the event that there is a need for pandemic-related contact tracing. For July, I/we will re-evaluate.

**Please keep informed. See previous guidance on the following page.** ➔



Updates from the Rector for Wednesday, May 26, 2021

- **Return to use of the Communion Rail, effective immediately.** Communicants are to briefly remove masks at the Communion Rail to consume the host (consecrated bread).
- **The Choir may include up to 8 vaccinated singers** for Trinity Sunday and Corpus Christi, subject to repertoire and choirmaster's discretion. (Consistent with past summer music rostering, we will normally have four singers on Sundays after Corpus Christi.)
- **Choir members, cantors and clergy who are vaccinated** may sing/chant and may do so unmasked. Those who prefer to remain masked may do so.
- **All in the pews, whether or not vaccinated, are to remain masked** for now, except when receiving the Sacrament. (We are exploring means to differentiate and provide separate guidance for vaccinated and unvaccinated worshipers in the pews.)
- **Ushers/greeters, whether or not vaccinated, are to remain masked**, in part to demonstrate the continued requirement for all who are seated in the pews.
- **People in the pews who are vaccinated and remain masked** may sing.
- **People in the pews who are unvaccinated are asked to refrain from singing**.
- **Vaccinated lectors, preachers, celebrants and lay altar ministers** may be unmasked when reading, preaching, presiding or otherwise serving at the altar.
- **Ministers** in the sanctuary may remain unmasked but should **mask for concluding procession** through the congregation and if/when greeting worshipers leaving the nave.

Updates from the Rector for Wednesday, May 19, 2021

**Pre-Registration for Sunday masses remains in place for now.** As has been the case, walk-ins may join us subject to available spots and manual registration.

**Mask requirements remain in place** anywhere on Ascension premises.

**Choir members will continue to sing live** – complying with diocesan and CDC guidance, including limits on number of singers – and will also continue to pre-record some repertoire.

**Eliminated for now: the circuitous entry through the garden and Wheeler Hall and temperature checks.** All attendees will now enter, per tradition, through the LaSalle Street door into the vestibule and narthex.

**Eliminated for now: Mandatory hand sanitizer prior to Communion.** (Ushers will continue to offer it for those who want it.)

**Eliminated for now: The priest's face shield.** (Yea!)

**Eliminated for now: The strict exiting directions and limitations** (after the mass).

**Eliminated for now: The intensive surface sanitizing measures.** The thorough weekly cleaning normally done by our sexton and other cleaning personnel will continue.

**Prayer Books will be returned to the pew racks** (but not the Hymnals, for now).

**Weekday parish office hours & 'business'** are back to normal with some restrictions (e.g. masks).