



# Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac

*The Episcopal Church in northeast and northcentral Wisconsin*

## PROTOCOLS AND BEST PRACTICES

*from the Bishop of Fond du Lac with the Covid Task Force  
effective March 1, 2022*

This document provides protocols and best practices for congregations and ministries responding to the Covid pandemic and other viruses. They are based on information from public health agencies and church leaders as considered by a diocesan task force. Full vaccination continues as the most effective method to reduce the risk of transmission. Decisions regarding activities in church buildings are determined by the priest-in-charge, or warden if there be no cleric, in consultation with the vestry. Decisions made are to account for local factors and demographics of the congregation.

### PROTOCOLS

- ◆ *MASKS*– Congregations should conform to CDC guidelines for their county (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>). Church leadership may implement stronger protocols. Disposable masks are to be made available.
- ◆ *DISTANCING*– Keeping at least 6 feet from others who don't live with you is encouraged. Signs encouraging social distancing are to be posted.
- ◆ *SINGING*– Congregational and choir singing is allowed while distanced.
- ◆ *ATTENDANCE*– Anyone experiencing symptoms of illness or has been recently exposed to a confirmed Covid-19 case is to refrain from attending in-person.
- ◆ *COMMUNION*– Both bread and wine are to be consecrated. Hosts are to be covered. Only fully vaccinated persons may distribute the elements by methods found in **Addendum B**.

### BEST PRACTICES

- ◆ *FOOD SERVICE*– Any person serving food or drink should be fully vaccinated. Masking is encouraged.
- ◆ *POSITIVE TEST*– An announcement of possible exposure may be made through church communications if it is learned a participant with a positive Covid-19 test attended an activity.
- ◆ *HAND SANITIZER*– Hand sanitizer is to be available, especially when receiving communion.
- ◆ *VENTILATION*– Doors are to be propped open in an occupied space. Also see **Addendum A**.
- ◆ *HAND-WASHING*– Liturgical leaders should wash hands with soap and water before each service. Hand sanitizer should be used before handling Eucharistic vessels.
- ◆ *PASTORAL CONTACT/HOME VISITS*– Masks are to be worn when any participant is not fully vaccinated or if the person visited requests it.

## ADDENDUM A: HVAC CONSIDERATIONS

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Regularly service air units to function at peak capacity as designed and intended for use.

### AIR EXCHANGE OR AIR MOVEMENT

- ◆ **Air exchange** is moving inside air to the outside and replacing or recirculating with outside air.
- ◆ **Air movement** is circulation of inside air in a space.

To reduce risk requires improved **air exchange** as air movement may increase risk.

- ◆ Commercial style HVAC system often use air exchange vents.
- ◆ Furnace systems often use outside air for combustion with air to heat (or cool) only circulating through that space (i.e. air movement).
- ◆ Contained hot water systems provide only air movement by rising hot air and sinking cold air.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Caution:** being too aggressive in moving outside air inside, especially in extremely cold weather, may damage the heating system and possibly other building systems.

1. With assistance from a qualified HVAC advisor determine unit type and have it serviced at least twice each year. Install highest-level filter recommended. MERV 13 filters are recommended, but not all units may tolerate its high level of filtration.
  - a. Maximize air exchange.
  - b. Determine if there are exhaust fan capabilities and operate to remove air from closed spaces.
  - c. Determine if energy saver functions limit outside air intake and change to maximize air intake.
2. Explore options to create air exchange. Use fans with one pulling in outside air, another pushing out inside air.
3. Do NOT run fans inside closed spaces or buildings - only for air exchange.

### ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Some items on the market may supplement HVAC systems.

- ◆ **Humidifiers** can help keep humidity up which may help reduce spread of viral droplets, though may add to mold problems. Worship space size may make multiple units necessary.
- ◆ **UV light** attachments are available for some systems. Cost may be prohibitive.
- ◆ **Ionization Technology:** Two types: fanless and fan based. Purchase as standalone units for use in buildings. Worship space size may make multiple units necessary.
- ◆ **HEPA filters** are considered effective for air purification but varies by unit. Some are combined with ionizing units. Worship space size may make multiple units necessary.

## **A**DDENDUM B: DISTRIBUTION OF CONSECRATED WINE

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### **OPTION A: INTINCTION**

The wine is to be consecrated in a chalice suitable for intinction. A mask may be temporarily removed to receive the elements. The communicant may not intinct for themselves. The liturgical minister who intincts the host into the wine must take care to avoid contact with a communicant's mouth by anything other than the tip of the host. If contact is made, the liturgical minister's hands are to be thoroughly sanitized before continuing.

### **OPTION B: COMMON VESSEL, INDIVIDUAL CUPS**

The wine is to be consecrated in a common vessel suitable for pouring, such as a cruet. A station of clean juice glasses is placed in an accessible location. Paper or plastic cups may not be used. A suitable receptacle to collect used glasses is to be placed near the station.

*If it seems meet and right so to do, the priest may bless the glasses for the period of their use.*

Taste and see that the Lord is good; happy are they who trust in him. The cup of blessing which we bless is a sharing in the Blood of Christ.

Let us pray.

Almighty God, whose blessed Son instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Grant that all who receive the holy Mysteries from these vessels, which we now consecrate for use in your Church, may be sustained by his presence and enjoy for ever his heavenly benediction, who lives and reigns in glory everlasting. Amen.

A mask may be temporarily removed to receive the elements. After receiving the host, the communicant proceeds to the station, takes a glass and approaches the liturgical minister. The liturgical minister pours a small amount of wine into the glass which is consumed by the communicant. The used glass is placed, by the communicant, into the receptacle. Following ablutions, the receptacle is removed to the sacristy.

After the service, used glasses are cleaned and rinsed in the receptacle with remnants of consecrated elements reverently poured into a piscina or outside directly to the ground. Glasses are to be washed to ensure sanitation before next use.