

COVID-19 Worship-planning Reminders

As we begin a new program year, take a moment to remind yourself of the most recent COVID-19 guidelines from the Diocese, last updated on April 5, 2022. Below we've highlighted a few areas of lingering confusion to assist you in your planning going forward.

1. Passing the offertory plate is permitted.

“Ushers may pass offering plates from the aisle into the pews, and consider whether plates will remain in an usher’s hands or be passed from person to person.” (*Stage 3B Guidelines, April 5, 2022, p. 4*)—This means local congregations may discern that the plate is passed from person to person, as was the custom in most places pre-pandemic.

2. Wearing masks, including while singing, is highly recommended when community risk is high, but it is not mandatory, [consistent with the CDC](#).

“Masks are required for unvaccinated individuals over the age of 2 but optional—though recommended—for everyone else.” (*Stage 3B Guidelines, April 5, 2022, multiple pages*)—This means vaccinated individuals are not required to mask, including while singing, unless at the discernment of local leadership.

3. Use of the common cup is permitted. It is a matter of local discernment.

“On Maundy Thursday the prohibition on drinking from the common cup/chalice is removed. Parishes and missions are encouraged, but not required, to return to offering the wine to communicants from a common cup for those desiring to receive the sacrament in this fashion. Where worship communities decide to return to offering the common cup, you are encouraged, but not required, to offer an opportunity for intinction separate from a common cup/chalice.” ([Guidelines, Best Practices and Suggestions for Administering the Blood of Christ during the Holy Eucharist, April 5, 2022](#))

4. Use of individual prepackaged bread/wine packets is now discouraged, and the bishops ask local churches to discontinue the practice.

“We prefer that you move away entirely from blessing prepackaged bread and wine or small individual cups in trays on the altar and back to our traditional practice of blessing one chalice and enough necessary flagons or cruets of wine.” ([Guidelines, Best Practices and Suggestions for Administering the Blood of Christ during the Holy Eucharist, April 5, 2022](#))

5. People do not need to sign in to worship or to other events.

“Consider how to best address tracking and tracing.” (*Stage 3B Guidelines, April 5, 2022, p. 4*)