



December 21, 2021

Dear colleagues,

Bishop Mary has already circulated a memo by Bishop Bruce Myers of the Diocese of Quebec regarding changes to preventative measures that came into effect in the province yesterday as a result of increasing cases of Covid-19 and the circulation of the omicron variant.

Each church will need to evaluate if it has the necessary resources to continue to maintain the protocols in place and then decide in their particular context if it is able to remain open or pivot to online worship only.

If your parish chooses to remain open please remember that:

VACCINATION PASSPORT: Everyone wishing to attend a service will need to present proof that they are adequately vaccinated or exempt from vaccination (ages 13+). This means that at least one person in each church will need to remain at the entrance of the church and use a smartphone or tablet to verify individuals' government-issued QR codes using the VaxiCode Verif application, which is freely available for download in the Apple Store or Google Play. Individuals between the ages of 14 and 75 need to provide photo identification matching the name on their vaccination passport.

ATTENDANCE: The number of people permitted to attend a service (other than funerals and weddings) is restricted to 50% of the building's usual capacity while maintaining **2 metres distance** from each household, to a maximum of 250 people. (Separate attendance guidelines for funerals and weddings are below.)

PHYSICAL DISTANCING: Individuals from different households should maintain a distance of **at least two metres**, including when seated. To exercise additional caution, the diocese is requesting parishes to revert to the greater 2 metre distance between households.

CONTACT TRACING: The Diocese is again requesting that parishes maintain a log of those who are attending worship (pre-registration is recommended if possible) for purposes of contact tracing.

SANITIZATION: Proper stations for sanitization of hands should be available.

MASKS: Masks must be worn by everyone at all times, except when receiving the eucharist. Readers, preachers, and presiders may also remove their masks while speaking, so long as they are at least two metres from the congregation.

SINGING: Hymns may be sung by the congregation if they wear masks while singing. Choirs and soloists may sing unmasked if the members are at least two metres apart from one another and at least two metres away from the congregation.



HOLY COMMUNION: The eucharist will continue to be distributed in one kind (i.e. bread only). To reduce movement about the church, the presider should bring communion to people at their seats.

COFFEE/FELLOWSHIP HOUR: It is recommended that such gatherings after a service be suspended until the overall situation improves. However, if such gatherings do take place, a maximum of 10 people may participate. Food and beverages may only be shared if they are served to individuals at their seat and/or they are prepared in a self-contained box or wrapper ahead of time.

HALL RENTALS: With the exception of receptions following funerals or weddings, a maximum of 10 people (or the occupants of three different residences) are permitted to rent a hall for a private function. For receptions following a funeral or wedding, a maximum of 25 people may attend. Food and beverages may only be shared if they are served to individuals at their seat and/or they are prepared in a self-contained box or wrapper ahead of time.

FUNERALS & WEDDINGS: When a maximum of 25 people wish to attend a funeral or wedding, vaccination passports are not required. If more than 25 people are expected to attend a funeral or wedding, vaccination passports are required, and the maximum attendance rises to 50% of the building's capacity while maintaining a distance of 2 metres between households. If condolences are received in the church building before a funeral, a maximum of 50 people should be in the building at any given time.

AA & SUPPORT GROUPS: Support group workshops and meetings (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous) are permitted up to a maximum of 250 participants or 50% capacity of the room, provided all remain seated and separated by at least a chair-length (whichever is less). Public health guidelines must be followed at all times.

Please remember that the situation has been changing rather quickly and things may change again.

If you have any questions, please be in touch with me or your territorial archdeacon.

I take this opportunity to wish you and your parishioners a very merry Christmas!

Stay safe,