



**The Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida  
GENERAL COVID GUIDELINES  
(Effective Ash Wednesday - 3/2/22)**

As mandatory diocesan COVID restrictions are relaxed, parish clergy and lay leaders must thoughtfully and prayerfully consider what COVID protocols are best for their congregations. Some clergy and vestries will continue to require rigid controls and mask mandates. Others will relax their guidelines as COVID numbers continue to fluctuate. Whatever your final parish COVID guidelines are, they must be posted clearly at all primary entrances and exits.

Please consider our Baptismal Covenant (BCP p. 301) as you discern your congregation's path forward. Do your policies feel just and inclusive? Do they align with the promise to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves? Will they protect those who are frail or weak, children, toddlers and infants at risk? Will your policies protect those who are immunocompromised, undergoing medical treatments or those with respiratory ailments?

**These new guidelines represent the minimum standards for safeguarding against COVID-19 in our churches. Clergy or vestries may add to these guidelines but are not permitted to reduce or eliminate any of them without permission from Canon Holcombe.**

**Significant Modifications to Existing Diocesan Guidelines**

1. Masks and face coverings are suggested, but no longer required, for fully vaccinated people in the pews. Unvaccinated people in the pews should remain masked (a person is considered fully vaccinated only if they have received all available doses for their age group, including boosters).
2. For those serving in the chancel in any capacity, or those who are in procession, they are to remain masked unless they are speaking into a microphone or are at least six feet away from others.
3. Pre-intincted wafers or an intinction chalice may be offered for intinction only.
4. The common cup restriction is still in place. No chalice or common cup may be offered.
5. During the consecration of the Eucharist, the celebrant may be unmasked if the elements (including the intinction chalice) are covered with a cloth or are in a ciborium with a lid. The priest host may be uncovered, and it is to be consumed by the celebrant. The celebrant no longer has to be gloved.

6. Childcare, nursery and food service workers must mask when in close proximity to others.
7. Choir members who are unvaccinated must remain masked when singing in a choir or in close proximity to others.
8. Full food and beverage service (at pre-COVID levels) may resume immediately.
9. The church must still have readily available masks, sanitizing gel or wipes.
10. Sanitizing stations should be located near all main entrances/exits.
11. Quarantine restrictions for those who test positive or those who are exposed to COVID positive persons are still in place:
  - If you are in close contact for 15 minutes or more with person X who tests positive, you must remain quarantined for five days from person X's positive test. If you are exposed to someone who tested positive, you should be tested on the fifth day after your exposure.
  - If your test is negative, you may resume your normal activities.
  - If your test is positive, you must quarantine for five additional days, and remain masked for the next additional five days.
  - If you tested positive for COVID, there is no need to be tested again for at least three months. You may continue to test positive for 90 days even though you are not contagious.
  - If you have a medical condition or if taking medications that weaken your immune system, you may not be fully protected even if you are fully vaccinated. You should continue to take all precautions recommended by your health care professional.

**If you have any specific questions about COVID-19 cases, decisions for closure or need guidance, please contact Canon Scott Holcombe at 321-525-2366 or email him at [sholcombe@cfdiocese.org](mailto:sholcombe@cfdiocese.org).**

### **Liturgical Guidelines for Lent**

- Shrove Tuesday pancake/waffle dinner and full food and beverage service may resume.
- Ash Wednesday (in the usual pre-COVID way) may resume with one exception: the person distributing the ashes must be gloved.
- No foot washing on Maundy Thursday or at any time during Lent.
- During Stations of the Cross, the clergy and one or two persons may move from station to station. The congregation is to remain seated and not process from station to station.
- Palms or palm crosses do not have to be in baggies or wrapped.