

An update from the St. John's COVID team (9/8/2022)

Your parish COVID team continues to meet periodically to adapt our church practices to the current pandemic conditions. It seems likely that we will have “waves” of COVID variants well into the future, but also periods in which we can function fairly normally.

To give more predictability in this unpredictable pandemic, we have organized our practices around the three categories set by the CDC and updated each Thursday: green/low risk of transmission, yellow/medium risk, and red/high risk. We'll check the CDC website [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>] each Friday to determine the best approach for the Sunday and week ahead.

GREEN

Worship and community life happen mainly as they did pre-pandemic. Masks and social distancing are optional (always welcome!); worship includes all the usual hymns and sung liturgy; choir sings and may process through the congregation. On September 11, we will return to using the communion rail and offering wine along with the host (wafers) for communion. We also look forward to returning to coffee hour in the Undercroft (basement) immediately following the service! (More news about coffee hour in the Community section.) Meetings are held in person, with an online option whenever appropriate.

A WORD ABOUT COMMUNION

- Wine will be offered in the common cup, and you may choose to drink from it or not. **We will NOT be practicing intinction, where the bread is dipped into the wine.** Contrary to some perceptions, multiple hands dipping into the wine actually spreads more germs than drinking from the cup (and wiping the edge between people). So your two choices will be drinking, or simply receiving the words, “The blood of Christ, the cup of salvation.” **Please be assured that communion “in one kind” (bread only) still conveys all the spiritual benefits of both kinds!**
- We will once again gather at the communion rail. You may choose to wear a mask and consume the host after returning to your seat. Or, if the stairs or closeness to people is a challenge, you may request that communion be brought to your seat, and an usher will let the priest know.

YELLOW

Masks are recommended, but still optional. Worship continues as normal, with the exception of communion distribution: When greater caution is indicated, we'll return temporarily to distributing the communion host at the crossing, when choir is singing in the chancel. The choir will not process through the congregation. Community conversation in the Undercroft continues after worship, with coffee still available, but masks are recommended. Meetings are suggested to be online or hybrid, with in-person people masked.

RED

Masks are required indoors, and social distancing is suggested. Sunday worship continues to be offered in person, except in the case of a health care emergency or other extenuating circumstance—but only with instrumental music (no singing), and communion is distributed at the crossing. Community conversation continues after worship without refreshments, or is moved outdoors when possible. Meetings are held online.

We hope this gives a bit more structure to the need for ongoing adaptation. As always, please talk to one of us if you have any questions.

St. John's COVID team: Jim Blanchette, Patty Hamilton, Josh Singer, Mary Wright, Vanessa Young, and Rev. Rebecca Liberty