

May 25, 2021 COG COVID Task Force Congregational Update

We are happy to let you know of some positive changes at Cross of Glory surrounding our COVID-19 protocols. These changes are possible in light of the CDC's latest update in regards to the effectiveness of the vaccine, and the subsequent relaxing of restrictions on national, state, local, and synodical levels for those who are fully vaccinated. With the shared health of our community in mind, below are a variety of lifted restrictions that will be in effect from **May 30-June 30**. At the end of June, we will reevaluate again in hopes of further easing restrictions.

What protocols continue?

- **Masks in worship:** Masks will still be worn before, during, and after all services as we continue to evaluate the safety of singing. We will reevaluate at the end of June.
- **Physical distance between musicians:** Singers and musicians will maintain a 12-foot distance from the congregation and from one another while leading worship.
- **Physical distance in worship, including during Sharing of the Peace:** We will continue to maintain physical distance during Sharing of the Peace. Please continue to refrain from hand shaking and hugging during worship services for the time being.
- **Offering plates in Narthex:** Offering will continue to be collected at plates located outside the sanctuary before and after services, and by gifts through mail or online giving.

What protocols are no longer in place?

- **Sign-in:** All persons entering the building are no longer required to sign in and out. However we continue to ask all persons to sanitize their hands upon entry.
- **Physical distancing:** Those who are fully vaccinated need not adhere to 6-foot distancing indoors or outdoors. Physical distancing will be monitored by individuals/family units according to your comfort level. During worship, attendees need not sit in specifically-marked spots. Every other pew will continue to be taped off during this time.
- **Masks in non-worship settings:** Masks are optional for those who are fully vaccinated in non-worship gatherings and meetings, both indoors and outdoors. You are of course welcome to continue wearing a mask if you prefer.

What protocols are new?

- **No occupancy limits:** There are no limits to the number of people allowed for Sunday services, special services (funerals, weddings, baptisms), meetings, or fellowship gatherings both indoors and outdoors. Virtual worship options will continue to be offered, and we encourage you to take part however you are most comfortable.

- **Congregational singing:** We now invite congregational singing as part of services. Please continue to keep your mask on during this time as we continue to assess singing safety.
- **No designated sanctuary seating:** Entering and exiting services can happen without specific direction from an usher. Ushers will still be available for assistance as needed, similar to before the pandemic.
- **Communion:** For the time being, communion will be shared on the first Sunday of the month and will be served in pews using the disposable kits. This means the congregants will temporarily lower masks to take communion. Communion kits will be distributed at service time and collected afterwards.
- **Food and Drink:** Light refreshments and beverages may be served outdoors during this time.

We again stress that these eased restrictions are possible due to local vaccination rates. We encourage the Cross of Glory community to be vaccinated if possible. If you haven't yet been vaccinated and need information or assistance, please contact the church office, the Task Force, or visit <https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/index.jsp>.

We are thankful that God has brought us through a very difficult year, and that we are finally able to begin to relax our protocols. The Task Force will reevaluate protocols again at the end of June. As always, we welcome any questions in the meantime. Thank you for your ongoing grace, creativity, patience, and care as we seek to faithfully share life together.

Serving the Cross of Glory community,

The COG COVID Task Force

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