

March 14, 2022

Friends;

In a news conference on March 10, provincial government leaders including the premier, health minister and provincial health officer announced a timeline for easing of provincial pandemic restrictions. The full details can be found at www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restrictions. Enclosed please find the updated diocesan guidance and protocols related to the same.

With the provincial transition to a long-term COVID-19 management strategy, and in consultation with the diocesan COVID-19 task force, we are now in a position to further lift some of our restrictions for church-related events, including worship, social gatherings and meetings.

The highlights of these changes include:

- A recommendation to continue wearing masks during worship.
- Current eucharistic guidelines remain until Maundy Thursday (April 14).
- Proof of vaccination requirements lift April 8.
- Return to shared meals and receptions after April 8.
- Long-term care visitation now permitted.

As we move forward together, we continue to err on the side of caution, upholding our commitment to protecting the most vulnerable amongst us. I am aware that this may, to some seem overly restrictive. I ask that you continue with patience and compassion as each of us grows comfortable with the changes in the coming weeks and months, recognizing that these changes raise anxiety for those for whom the risks remain high.

In Easter hope,



+Anna

DIOCESAN COVID-19 GUIDANCE

Effective March 14, 2022

To be reviewed and updated by the diocesan COVID-19 task force April 8.

Recognizing the uniqueness of space/facilities and comfort level of each parish and its members, the following changes are offered to support our shared commitment to the safety and well-being of all who come together in worship and in the use of our facilities. Each parish/community will need to consider its own readiness and capacity to address the lifting of restrictions.

Capacity

All capacity restrictions are now lifted.

Eucharist

Current eucharist guidelines will remain in place until Maundy Thursday, April 14, at which time the reception in two kinds will be permitted.

Masking:

While the mandate to wear masks indoors has been lifted, it is recommended that parishes continue the practice of wearing masks during church worship services. This is based on demographics of our congregations, singing together, limited ventilation and physical space.

Clergy will continue to wear a fresh disposable mask when distributing communion.

We anticipate that the use of masks will continue to evolve in the weeks to come as we make the transition from mandated mask wearing to individual choice. It is recommended that we remain cautious as we move forward, knowing that there are some in our church family who are immuno-compromised and young children under five year of age who are still not able to be vaccinated. Our commitment is to support each other in ensuring a safe environment for all to participate as much as possible.

Receptions/Meals/Potlucks

Receptions, meals and potlucks may resume after April 8.

Long-Term Care Facilities

Visitation restrictions that were put in place in December are now lifted. Communal gatherings for Eucharist are not recommended in care facilities at this time. Individual visits with communion under one kind (bread) is permitted.

Proof of Vaccine Card:

Effective April 8, 2022, the requirement to ask for proof of vaccination at events/activities outside of worship will be lifted.

Issued March 14, 2022
diocesan COVID-19 task force