



COVID-19 Protocols for Gathering

The Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem recommends the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) “[How to Protect Yourself & Others](#)” web page for detailed advice about our continuing effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

General Guidelines

Indoor Gathering

When considering indoor gathering and worship, each parish should determine the following:

- Your county’s “[COVID-19 Community Level](#)” as calculated by the CDC
- The Vestry’s consensus to open for indoor gathering/worship
- The agreement of the Rector/Priest-in-charge to open for indoor gathering/worship

Parish leadership should develop and communicate prevention steps for their parish as informed by the CDC’s “[How to Protect Yourself & Others](#)” and “[COVID-19 Community Level](#)” web pages. People with symptoms, a positive COVID-19 test, or exposed to someone with COVID-19 should consider online worship/gathering instead of gathering in-person while masked.

Masking

As suggested by the CDC, “People may choose to mask at any time.” Additionally, the following masking recommendations are suggested based on your county’s “[COVID-19 Community Level](#)”:

- High: Everyone should wear a mask indoors
- Medium: People at high risk for severe illness should wear a mask indoors
- Low: No mask requirement indoors

The CDC’s “[Use and Care of Masks](#)” web page is a good resource for learning more about the importance of masks for indoor gathering.

Specific Recommendations

Singing

Congregational or choir singing should follow the “Masking” guidelines above.

Eucharist

For indoor worship in counties with a “[COVID-19 Community Level](#)” of Medium or High should consider these recommendations for celebrating the Eucharist:

- The Celebrant should sanitize hands liberally and wear a mask.
- The Sacrament should be received by the communicants in only one kind (the Bread).
- Any person who delivers the Bread to the communicants should sanitize hands liberally and wear a mask.
- The Cup should be received only by the Celebrant.

There are no COVID-19 specific recommendations for celebrating the Eucharist in counties with a “[COVID-19 Community Level](#)” of Low.