



Gathering Protocols Update, March 9, 2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace and peace be yours through our fellowship in the body of Christ.

We write to you during Lent 2022 – a solemn time of self-examination when Alleluias are hidden, crosses are shrouded in purple, and the remembrance of Jesus’ death is imminent. Even so, our Lenten path leads unfailingly to the hope of new life in the Resurrection.

As we and our parish communities observe this holy Lent, we see signs of increasing hope as new cases of COVID-19 decrease. The pandemic that altered our lives and the common life of our parishes seems to be lessening its impact. As new cases and hospitalizations trend downward, we want to affirm that some measures suggested in our May 2021 letter may now be relaxed.

The Diocese of Bethlehem encompasses wide geographic, cultural, social, and economic diversity within its borders, and local conditions vary correspondingly. Still, our call as people of faith is simple: to love God with all we have and are, and to love and care for each other as we would love and care for Jesus. Diocesan leadership remains confident that vestries and clergy will make careful and responsible decisions about in-person and online worship and other activities with attention to the needs and conditions of their communities. To assist in this effort, the Diocese is ready to offer updated recommendations for gathering. We will continue to refresh these resources as circumstances change and research advances. The most current information is always available on the Diocesan web site at <https://diobeth.org/covid19>.

Please use the recommendations provided on the diocesan COVID-19 web page as you make decisions for your community and yourself. As always, if you need clarification or have questions, please contact Canon Steve Baker, Canon for Mission Resources & COO (steve@diobeth.org or 610-691-5655 x258) or any Bishop’s staff member.

Sincerely,

Carol C. McMullen-Standing Committee
St. Luke’s, Scranton

Sara McNelis-Diocesan Council
Grace Church, Kingston

The Rev. Dr. David A. Zwifka-Diocesan Council
St. Luke’s, Lebanon

The Rt. Rev. Kevin D. Nichols-Bishop

The Rev. Doug Moyer-Standing Committee (President)
Christ Church, Reading

The Rev. Dr. Jane Williams-Diocesan Council
Cathedral Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem