

# The Art of Reopening our Churches for Public Worship: Guidelines for Weddings During COVID-19

July 31, 2020

## Overarching Principles

- Every effort must be made at prioritizing the safety of all who enter our facilities.
- Recommendations from the CDC, MDH and the Governor's Office must be adhered to as closely as is possible.
- Upholding the dignity of the liturgy must remain a focus as we prepare our celebrations.
- If individuals are feeling ill, they must remain at home.
- **Size of the assembly needs to be limited to 50% of seating capacity, not to exceed 250, while following physical distancing requirements dependent on the guidance of public health authorities.**

## Indications

- ✓ A bullet point as shown here, is an indication of **required** practice.
- A bullet point as shown here, is an indication of **recommended** practice.

## Preparing our Space

### ❖ Entrances

- ✓ Use of hand sanitizer is to be encouraged upon entering and exiting the church.
- ✓ Gatherings of people in gathering spaces should be discouraged.
- ✓ Holy Water fonts and stoups must remain empty.
- All doors could be propped open.
- Hospitality Ministers could be stationed at the entrances to encourage the use of hand sanitizer upon entering the church.
- Hospitality Ministers could hold doors open.

### ❖ Assembly Seating

- ✓ Pews are to be marked for seating.
- ✓ Physical distancing of six (6) feet is to be maintained, except for members of the same household.
- ✓ **Members of the liturgical assembly MUST wear face coverings. These must be removed before the reception of Holy Communion.**
- Calculations could be made as to how many people are able to be in the church (not to exceed 250 people or 50%) and still maintain physical distancing.

### ❖ Sanctuary Seating

- ✓ Presider's chair and Deacon's chair or Concelebrant chairs must be spaced six (6) feet apart.

- ✓ **Bride and Groom may be seated in the sanctuary, but must maintain physical distancing from presider.**
- ✓ No other ministers (including bride and groom) are to be seated in the sanctuary.

## Ministers

### ❖ Priests

- ✓ A priest with a respiratory infection of any kind or any illness must avoid celebrating public Masses. The same holds true for other ministers who might serve at a Mass (deacon, servers, lectors, etc.).
- ✓ **The Priest must wear face coverings during procession and recessional, during the vows and during the distribution of Holy Communion. He may choose to wear a face covering during the other parts of the ceremony, but is not required to wear one.**
- ✓ The celebrant must sanitize his hands before and after each Mass.

### ❖ Deacons

- ✓ A deacon with a respiratory infection of any kind or any illness must avoid assisting at public Masses.
- ✓ The deacon must sanitize his hands before and after each Mass.
- ✓ **The Deacon must wear face coverings during procession and recessional, during the vows and during the distribution of Holy Communion. He may choose to wear a face covering during the other parts of the ceremony, but is not required to wear one.**

### ❖ Bride

- Are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering during the processional and recessional.
- May be accompanied (i.e. by groom, parents, etc.) during the processional.
- ✓ The Bride must sanitize her hands before and after the wedding ceremony.
- ✓ **The Bride and Groom, if seated next to each other, are not required to wear face coverings as long as physical distancing is maintained between others who are present.**

### ❖ Groom

- Are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering during the processional and recessional.
- May be accompanied (i.e. by bride, parents, etc.) during the processional.
- ✓ The Groom must sanitize his hands before and after the wedding ceremony.
- ✓ **The Bride and Groom, if seated next to each other, are not required to wear face coverings as long as physical distancing is maintained between others who are present.**

### ❖ Bridal Party

- ✓ **MUST wear face coverings, except during the vows and ONLY if physical distancing is maintained.**

- ✓ May be accompanied (i.e. by groomsman, bridesmaid etc.) during the processional ONLY if from the same household.
- ✓ If not from same household, bridal party should walk individually during the processional and recessional.
- ✓ The Bridal Party must sanitize their hands before and after the wedding ceremony.
- ❖ Altar Servers
  - ✓ May be involved in processional and recessional.
  - ✓ They are not to hold the *Roman Missal* during any part of the Mass, nor assist with the *lavabo*.
  - ✓ All Altar Servers must sanitize their hands before and after Mass.
  - ✓ All Altar Servers must wear face coverings during Mass.
  - ✓ If they wear albs, these must not be used again until they have been laundered.
  - ✓ Processional Cross and candles must be wiped down after each Mass.
    - It may be best practice not to have altar servers at this time.
- ❖ Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
  - ✓ May continue to be involved in the distribution of Holy Communion (see specifics below).
  - ✓ All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must sanitize hands before and after the distribution of Holy Communion.
  - ✓ Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must wear face coverings during the distribution of Holy Communion.
  - ✓ Hand sanitizer could be placed on small tables near communion stations for ministers to cleanse hands in the event they come into contact with the communicant.
- ❖ Ushers
  - ✓ Must not shake hands or offer an embrace to those gathering.
  - ✓ All Ushers must sanitize their hands before and after Mass.
  - ✓ **MUST wear face coverings.**
    - Encourage the use of hand sanitizer when people enter or exit the church.
    - Help seat people or direct them to the available pews – must maintain physical distancing of six (6) feet.
    - Assist with indicating when people would enter the procession for the reception of Holy Communion.
- ❖ Lectors
  - ✓ May continue to proclaim the Word of God from the ambo.
  - ✓ All Lectors must sanitize their hands before and after Mass.
  - ✓ Must wear a face covering during processional and recessional, if involved.
  - ✓ Face coverings are to be removed during the proclamation of the Word of God and Universal Prayer.
    - It may be wise to use only one Lector for each Mass to reduce the number of people in the sanctuary and the number of people touching or sharing objects.

- All books (i.e. *Lectionary*, binders, etc.) could be wiped down after each Mass.
- ❖ Music Ministers
  - ✓ Limited to accompanist and cantor.
  - ✓ All Music Ministers must sanitize their hands before and after Mass.
  - ✓ **All Music Ministers must wear face coverings except when singing or making announcements.**
  - ✓ Keyboards, microphones, music stands, books, etc. must be wiped down after each liturgy.
  - ✓ Congregational singing is to be omitted. Singing is to be done by cantor ONLY.
  - Additional instrumentalists could be utilized if physical distancing is possible.
- ❖ Sacristans
  - Sacristans may set up for Mass as usual.
  - ✓ **MUST wear face coverings.**
  - ✓ All Sacristans must sanitize their hands before and after handling any vessels, vestments, etc.
- ❖ Technology Ministers
  - ✓ All Technology Ministers must sanitize their hands before and after Mass.
  - ✓ **MUST wear face coverings.**
  - ✓ If ministers are used to run projection systems or sound systems, the equipment must be wiped down after each liturgy.

## Order of Celebrating Matrimony

- ❖ The Introductory Rites
  - ✓ Appropriate physical distance must be maintained during entrance procession.
  - ✓ All priests or deacons in the procession must wear face coverings.
  - **Bride and Groom may be accompanied (i.e. parents, groom/bride, etc.) during the procession and are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings.**
  - ✓ **Bridal Party may be accompanied (i.e. by groomsman/bridesmaid, etc.) during the procession if from the same household. Face coverings are required.**
  - ✓ **If not from the same household, members of the Bridal Party should walk in individually in the procession. Face coverings are required.**
  - ✓ As a part of the introduction (or at some other designated time) the celebrant offers instruction to the liturgical assembly regarding process during Mass.
    - At the start of Mass, or at a suitable point during Mass, the priest should explain that those who desire to receive Holy Communion may do so at the appropriate time, but that those who wish to remain in their places may do so. He may add that the faithful should maintain a 6-foot distance from each other as they come forward for Holy Communion.
  - ✓ Altar Servers should not hold the *Roman Missal* for the Collect.

- ❖ The Liturgy of the Word
  - ✓ If a deacon is to proclaim the Gospel, he must receive the blessing from the celebrant while maintaining physical distancing requirements.
- ❖ The Celebration of Matrimony
  - ✓ **If physical distancing can be maintained (excluding between bride and groom), face coverings are optional for Bridal Party during the exchange of vows, but are required for the Priest/Deacon.**
  - ✓ If physical distancing cannot be maintained, face coverings are to be worn (see exception above).
- ❖ The Liturgy of the Eucharist
  - ✓ The deacon or the celebrant himself must prepare the altar.
  - ✓ The gifts must not be processed to the altar but, instead, brought from the credence table.
  - ✓ The elements which will be consumed by the celebrant must be placed in the usual way. Additional corporals must be placed on the altar as far from the celebrant as is possible. Any hosts to be consecrated and distributed to the liturgical assembly must be placed on these corporals.
  - ✓ For the elevation of the sacred species at “*Through him, and with him, and in him,*” if a deacon is present, he may stand alongside the priest and elevate the chalice.
  - ✓ **The Sign of Peace is to be offered in a non-physical manner.**
  - ✓ The celebrant is the only one to consume the Precious Blood from the chalice. Concelebrants must receive by *intinction*.
  - ✓ Deacons are to receive the Precious Body ONLY.
  - ✓ Members of the liturgical assembly are not to receive the Precious Blood until further notice.
  - ✓ If any members of the liturgical assembly are wearing face coverings, they must remove them before coming forward for Holy Communion.
  - ✓ Holy Communion may not be distributed with gloves, nor may it be received in the hand if a member of the liturgical assembly is wearing gloves.
  - ✓ All ministers, including the celebrant and deacon, must sanitize their hands (e.g. with hand sanitizer) immediately before distributing Holy Communion.
  - ✓ Holy Communion must be received in the hand only and is to be distributed at the prescribed time during Mass
    - Should someone come forward to receive a blessing, there should be no physical contact between individuals.
  - ✓ Physical distancing must be adhered to during the communion procession.
  - ✓ Ushers should assist with the communion procession.
    - Tape may be placed on aisles to indicate where people are to stand and move to during the communion procession.
  - ✓ At the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion, the celebrant (and any other ministers) carefully combine any remaining Body of Christ into one ciborium and place it in the tabernacle, and then sanitize their hands (e.g. with hand

sanitizer). *NOTE: One may want to sanitize hands before combining the Body of Christ into a ciborium.*

- ✓ Altar Servers are not to hold the *Roman Missal* for the Prayer after Communion.

❖ **The Conclusion of the Celebration**

- ✓ The celebration concludes as usual.
- ✓ **Bridal Party may be accompanied (i.e. by groomsman/bridesmaid, etc.) during the recessional if from the same household. Face coverings are required.**
- ✓ **If not from the same household, members of the Bridal Party should walk in individually in the recessional. Face covering are required.**

**Additional Requirements/Recommendations**

- ✓ Hymnals and missalettes must be removed from the church. If needed, use recyclable worship aids that are not to be shared.
- ✓ Special care must be taken to ensure sanitation takes place between Masses or other times the public may be entering the church.
- ✓ Congregating of people either before or after Mass is to be discouraged.
- ✓ **Receiving lines should take place outdoors, when possible, and physical distancing should be adhered to.**
- Consideration should be made for restroom use. A suggestion might be to place tape on the floor outside of the restroom to indicate where to stand in line to wait while maintaining physical distancing.

**Photos**

- **It is recommended that photos be taken outdoors when possible.**
- ✓ **For photos taken indoors, face coverings must be worn as staging for photos takes place. They may be removed when photos are being taken and should be worn following the photo.**

**Outdoor Weddings**

- ✓ **Bishop Kettler is granting permission for outdoor weddings to take place, but ONLY on church property and ONLY on a temporary basis.**
- ✓ **In alignment with the Governor's EO, face coverings are not required for outdoor weddings, but they are STRONGLY RECOMMENDED.**
- ✓ **Physical distancing must be maintained at all times.**