

Dear Brother Priests,

More and more people are asking if Covid restrictions have been updated lately, whether it is permitted to sing hymns and parts of the Mass, to have use of holy water fonts, etc. I do not recall receiving any Provincial update since mid-September. After a brief consultation with Archbishop Pettipas, we want to remind everyone of present protocols and our decision to relax a small number of existing restrictions.

A: The following addresses present government protocols:

In all settings, it is important that measures are implemented to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. This includes, but is not limited to ensuring: capacity limits, physical distancing, barrier use (where appropriate), proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, enhanced and appropriate cleaning and disinfecting, records management and building maintenance.

(September 15, 2021 Provincial Protocols)

1. In-person attendance for worship services remains limited to 1/3 of fire code occupancy. The pastor is not counted towards the capacity limit.
2. All attendees at a place of worship must maintain 2 metres' distance at all times from people who are not part of their household.
3. Attendees are required to mask in all indoor public places and indoor workplaces unless they qualify for an exception.
4. Congregants must not attend in person if they are experiencing the most common symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat).
5. Faith leaders and other speakers may remove their masks while speaking if there is a distance of 2 metres between the speaking location and other congregants. The speaker must put their mask back on once finished speaking.
6. Faith leaders and speakers must follow hand hygiene measures when removing and donning their masks.
7. Place hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol in locations throughout the place of worship.
8. Enhance cleaning and disinfecting practices as described in the [General Operational Guidance](#) must continue to be followed.
9. Outdoor in-person religious services must follow public outdoor gathering restrictions (up to 150 attendees with 2 metres' distance between households.) ie: weddings & funerals.
10. For indoor weddings and funerals, Provincial guidelines apply: a limit of 50 attendees or 50% of fire code capacity, whichever is less.

B: Relaxed and permitted

1. A procession with cross-bearer, 2 candles-bearers, the Book of Gospels, and presider. Masked and keeping 2 metre distance between participants.
2. Congregational singing will be allowed but masks must be worn over mouth and nose while singing.

3. Song leader, choir members and cantor must practice 2 metre distance between participants and continue to be masked while singing. Sharing of microphones is discouraged.
4. Wind instruments are not permitted.
5. On reaching the sanctuary, altar servers are to keep 2 metre distance for each other. They do not serve as acolytes at the altar.
6. Holy water may be placed in fonts for use but should be changed after every liturgy.
7. Reception of communion of the Precious Blood is limited to the celebrant and concelebrants (using individual chalices or by intinction).
8. A recessional procession following the same requirements as the entrance procession.
9. Proper sanitation of cross and candles is to be observed.

If you have any questions, concerns or comments on any of the above, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

I wish you all a peaceful and joyful Advent season.

Msgr Charles Lavoie PH

November 26, 2021