

COVID-19 Safety Plan

Use this Ontario government template to document how your organization will keep clergy, staff, and parishioners safe at your church during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[How to develop your COVID-19 safety plan: A guide for Ontario workplaces](#) explains what you should think about and gives examples to help you come up with your plan for the church.

Company details

Business name: Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough

jurisdiction or as the health precautions change provincially

Date completed: February 12, 2021

Developed by: Pastoral Administration Team of the RC Diocese of Peterborough (Contact – Deirdre Thomas, Assistant to the Bishop / Communications, 705 745 5123 x24)

Division/group: Completed for each parish

Name of Church:

Date distributed: February 15, 2021

Others consulted: Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, Catholic Mutual Insurance, Legal Counsel, Medical Doctor with expertise in epidemiology, Local Medical Officers of Health of the six Health Units serving the Diocese.

Revision date: To be revised as directed by +Most Rev. Bishop Miehm or as the health precautions change in each Health Unit’s

Provide as much information in response to each question as possible. This will help your parishioners to know exactly what to do and what to expect.

The final page will help you create a snapshot version of your plan to post in the church. This can act as a reference for clergy, staff and parishioners and let others who come into your church know what you are doing to help keep everyone in your church safe.

The COVID-19 pandemic is an evolving situation – review your plan regularly and make changes as required. Refer to the Ontario government’s [COVID-19 website](#) for up-to-date information.

1. How will you ensure all clergy, staff and parishioners know how and are able to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19?

A. Communicate these key messages to parishioners:

- Pray always. (See Appendix A)
- Wash hands thoroughly and frequently. Use sanitizers at the church doors.
- Maintain a physical distance from others of 2 metres or 6 feet.
- Wear a face mask inside the church unless you have a health exemption from this requirement.
- If you have travelled outside the area, follow the quarantine regulations and a dispensation from attending Sunday Mass or Days of Obligation is in place.
- If you are ill or have been in contact with someone who is ill, stay home from church.
- Stay at home as much as possible.
- Connect with others virtually.
- Masses are available on TV or through livestreaming of Masses or taped Masses. A webpage of livestreaming and taped Masses is maintained by the Diocese: <https://www.peterboroughdiocese.org/en/how-do-i-find/livestreaming-and-broadcasting.aspx>
- Say “thank you” to frontline staff and community workers.
- Contact Tracing for parishioners and staff is required.

B. Use these means to communicate the information:

- Information about the COVID-19 health precautions is communicated as follows:
 - Sunday bulletin distributed electronically
 - Parish website
 - Parish Twitter account
 - Parish Facebook page
 - Announcement before/at each Sunday Mass (see Appendix B)
 - COVID-19 Health and Safety posters are at entrance and exits of churches and parish offices.
- Diocese of Peterborough webpage for COVID-19 Updates: <https://www.peterboroughdiocese.org/en/how-do-i-find/covid-19-update.aspx>
- Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/DiocesePtbo/>
- Twitter - @DiocesePtbo

- Signage will be visible at the parish as per the *WorshipSafe* manual and the directives from the Diocese.

Notices at the parish include the following information:

- If you feel sick or your temperature is elevated, or you are experiencing any of the following symptoms coughing and wheezing, fatigue, loss of appetite, shortness of breath, excessive sputum, aching muscles, headaches, chills, confusion, runny nose, shaking, you are asked to refrain from entering the church.
- You are reminded that if you are sick or your health is compromised, you are not obligated to participate in Sunday Mass or a Holy Day of Obligation.
- Be sure to use the hand sanitizer before entering the church.
- Be sure to follow the guidance of the ushers/ministers of hospitality and sit only in the designated places to ensure physical distancing at all times.
- Wear a face mask.

Doors will be marked “entrance” and “exit” to avoid unnecessary contact or congestion. Where possible, weather permitting, it is recommended that the doors of the church should be open to avoid contact with handles. If this is not possible, ushers, wearing face masks and disposable gloves, should assist.

Pews are roped off in some way to designate available seating while maintain a physical distance of 2 metres or 6 feet.

Washrooms will be marked “closed” and only one washroom at the parish will remain “open” and it will be cleaned after each use.

Crying rooms are closed and there is a sign marked “closed” on the door to the Crying Room.

Water fountains will be marked “not available during the pandemic.”

The public font method of distribution for holy water is suspended during the pandemic.

Votive prayer candles are not in use during the pandemic unless the parish has asked parishioners to bring their own lighters.

C. Provide information on a frequent basis.

- The parish communicates weekly with parishioners and more frequently as needed.

D. Keep the information updated.

- Updates from the ON government and/or the Premier’s Office are communicated to the parish by the Diocese.
- **The parish regularly updates the information posted on the website, Facebook and Twitter feeds.**
- The parish follows the health precautions and Orders issued and updated by the Medical Officer of Health as per the chart and listing of parishes that follows.

Health Units and Medical Officers of Health

<p>North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit</p> <p>345 Oak Street West, North Bay, ON, P1B 2T2 Tel: (705) 474-1400 Fax: (705) 474-8252 Web: http://www.myhealthunit.ca Medical Officer of Health/Executive Officer: Dr. Jim Chirico Board of Health Chair: Nancy Jacko</p>	<p>Durham Region Health Department</p> <p>605 Rossland Road East, PO Box 730 Whitby, ON, L1N 0B2 Tel: (905) 668-7711 Fax: (905) 666-6214 Web: https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/health-and-wellness.aspx Medical Officer of Health & Commissioner: Dr. Robert Kyle Board of Health (Health & Social Services Committee) Chair: John Henry</p>	<p>Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit</p> <p>200 Rose Glen Road Port Hope, ON, L1A 3V6 Tel: (866) 888-4577 Fax: (905) 885-9551 Web: http://www.hkpr.on.ca Medical Officer of Health: Dr. Lynn Noseworthy Board of Health Chair: Cammie Jaquays</p>
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<p>Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit</p> <p>15 Sperling Drive Barrie, ON L4M 6K9 Tel: (705) 721-7520 Fax: (705) 721-1495 Web: http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org Medical Officer of Health & Chief Executive Officer: Dr. Charles Gardner</p>	<p>Peterborough Public Health Unit</p> <p>Jackson Square, 185 King St. Peterborough, ON, K9J 2R8 Tel: (705) 743-1000 Fax: (705) 743-2897 Web: http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca Medical Officer of Health: Dr. Rosana Salvaterra Board of Health Chair: Kathryn Wilson</p>	<p>Hastings and Prince Edward Counties Health Unit</p> <p>179 North Park Street Belleville, ON K8P 4P1 Tel: (613) 966-5500 Fax: (613) 966-9418 Web: http://hpepublichealth.ca/ Acting Medical Officer of Health: Dr. Piotr Oglaza Board of Health Chair: Jo-Anne Albert</p>
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Board of Health Chair: Anita Dubeau	Places of Worship Liaison: Keith Beecroft	
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Peterborough Public Health Unit

Cathedral of St. Peter-in-Chains
 Immaculate Conception Parish
 Our Lady of Assumption, Otonabee
 St. John the Evangelist, Keene
 St. Anne Parish
 St. Alphonsus Liguori Parish
 Sacred Heart Parish
 St. John the Baptist Parish
 St. Joseph Parish, Douro
 St. Thomas More Parish, Millbrook
 St. Martin of Tours Parish, Ennismore
 St. Paul Parish, Norwood
 Our Lady of Mount Carmel Mission, Havelock
 St. Paul the Apostle Parish, Lakefield
 St. Jean de Brebeuf Mission, Buckhorn
 Our Lady of Good Counsel Mission, Young’s Point
 St. Mary of the Purification Mission, Chandos Lake
 Diocesan Pastoral Centre

Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit

St. Mary Parish, Lindsay
 Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Cardiff
 St. John Vianney Mission, Highland Grove
 Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Port Hope
 Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Hastings
 Sacred Heart Mission, Harwood
 Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (St. Mary) Parish, Grafton
 Our Lady Queen of Peace, Bobcaygeon / St. Aloysius, Fenelon Falls
 St. John Parish, Kirkfield
 St. Margaret Mary Mission, Coboconk
 Our Lady Help of Christians Mission, Kirkfield
 St. Anthony Mission, Woodville
 St. Luke Parish, Downeyville
 St. Michael Parish, Cobourg
 St. Patrick Parish, Kinmount
 Our Lady of Fatima Mission, Minden
 Holy Angels Parish, Brighton
 Korean Martyrs, Brighton
 St. Jerome Mission, Warkworth
 Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, Campbellford

Hastings and Prince Edward Counties Health Unit

St. Alphonsus Parish, Wooler

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Honey Harbour
St. John the Baptist Mission, Port Severen
St. Joseph Parish, Bracebridge
St. John the Baptist Mission, Minett
St. Mary Parish, Huntsville
St. Kateri Tekakwitha Mission, Baysville
Mission of St. Mary of the Assumption, Dwight
St. Paul Parish, Gravenhurst
St. James the Great Parish, Mactier
St. Anne Mission, Port Carling

Durham Region Health Unit

St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Newcastle
St. Joseph Parish, Bowmanville
St. Therese Parish, Courtice
St. Bernadette Mission, Nestleton

North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit

St. Joseph Parish, Powassan
St. John Mission, Nipissing
St. Patrick Parish, Kearney
Holy Spirit Mission, Burk's Falls
St. Peter the Apostle Parish, Parry Sound
Mission of St. Peter, (Killbear) Nobel
Sacred Heart Parish, Trout Creek
St. Augustine Mission, South River
St. Mary Mission, Port Loring
Holy Family Parish, Britt
St. Therese Mission, Pointe au Baril
St. Michael Mission, Rosseau

Health Unit Boundaries and Information at:

<https://www.phdapps.health.gov.on.ca/PHULocator/Default.aspx>

2. How will you screen for COVID-19?

Screening for Clergy and Lay Staff

As much as possible, clergy and lay staff will work remotely from home.

Here is the online Screening Tool which clergy and staff will use.

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

COVID-19 Screening Tool for Businesses and Organizations (Screening Workers)

https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid19-cms-assets/2021-01/Guidance-Screening-Workplace-Jan7_EN.pdf

COVID-19 worker and employee screening

Clergy and lay staff will complete this online screening tool for the the days they are attending the work place before going to on-site work.

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/screening/worker/>

The priest will take his temperature prior to celebrating Mass at the parish. If the priest has an elevated temperature, he will not celebrate Mass.

Screening for Parishioners

The following information has been communicated to parishioners so that they may self-assess before deciding to attend church.

Parishioners are asked to self-screen before attending church, including taking their temperature. Those with a temperature above 37.5° C/98.6° F are asked to not attend Mass. Those who exhibit fever or any other indications of a viral infections are asked to seek medical attention before coming to church. In order to mitigate the potential spread of the virus, all those over the age of 3 are required to wear a face mask/face covering. (3-ply face mask is recommended)

At Home



How are you?

- In the last 24 hours, have you experienced any of these symptoms: temperature over 37.5° C/98.6° F, difficulty breathing, chest pain, cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain/aches, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, or diarrhea?
- Have you travelled out of the country or province?



In the last fourteen days,

- Have you lived with, cared for or had close physical contact with someone who is in mandatory self-quarantine or who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who is presenting with symptoms?
- Have you lived with, cared for or had close physical contact with someone who has recently returned from travelling outside of Canada or outside of Ontario?



Take your temperature at home and if it is above 37.5° Celsius or 98.6° Fahrenheit – please stay home.



Obligation to attend Sunday Mass

- If you have answered "yes" to any of the questions above or have a temperature above 37.5° C/98.6° F, please stay home.
- Catholics who are ill are not obligated to attend Sunday Mass.
- Additionally, during these pandemic days, the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass continues.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- All in the assembly (with the exception of the priest and ministers unless they are so directed by a Medical Officer of Health) are strongly encouraged to wear a face mask.
- The face mask should be attached behind the ears for easy, touchless removal.



Water Bottle

- The water fountains are closed at the church.
- Bring your water bottle if you may need a drink of water while at church.



Go to the washroom at home.

- Mom always asked if everyone had gone before we got in the car for Mass – it is time to remember her practical advice.
- The washroom at the church is only to be used for emergencies and it will not be cleaned between uses.

At the Church – Another Reminder

SELF CARE CHECK-UP

Have you taken your temperature at home? Is your temperature normal?


Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms -coughing and wheezing, fatigue, loss of appetite, shortness of breath, excessive sputum, aching muscles, headaches, chills, confusion, runny nose and/or shaking?

Have you been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

Have you been out of the country or the province? If yes, did you observe the mandatory 14 day quarantine upon your return?


Are you awaiting test results from your own COVID-19 test?

Getting Back Home




Cleaning

- Wash your hands thoroughly.
- It's your choice... You may wish to wash the clothes you have worn outside of the home when you arrive at home.



Keeping Track

- If you accidentally came within the 6 feet/2 metre physical distance of someone you know, write down the name of the person and the date of the Mass or the date of contact at the parish.



Testing Positive for COVID-19

- If you test positive for COVID-19 and have been attending the parish for Mass or personal prayer, please call the parish office to let us know. We want to extend pastoral care to you and safeguard the health of others.
- If you have been tracking the people with whom you may have had contact, please share that information with the Health Unit.
- If a priest or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the parish community will be informed.

3. How will you control the risk of transmission in your church?

A. Purchase Equipment to control the risk of transmission.

Protective equipment for the use of parish clergy and staff has been ordered.

- Face masks for clergy and staff (N95 not required);
- Small supply of face masks for parishioners if so determined by the pastor;
- Face shields (suggested not required);
- Plastic disposable gloves for clergy, staff and volunteers;
- Hand Sanitizer; source and buy in bulk and large quantities if possible;
- Touchless hand sanitizer dispenser or foot pedal style, not required but suggested;
- Liquid Hand Soap;
- Touchless hand soap dispensers, not required but suggested;
- Disinfectant solutions for in depth and continuous cleaning all surfaces. Be aware of any allergies or sensitives in the parish prior to ordering.
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- Touchless hand sanitizer dispenser, not required but suggested;
- Tally Counter, not required but suggested.
- Batteries for touchless hand sanitizers;
- Painter's Tape in bright colours (many rolls) for physical distancing marking and enter exit arrows.

B. Clean the Church.

Cleaning of Churches and Related Facilities

Churches should always be clean and tidy; however, in times of pandemic, extra care and attention must be taken to ensure that surfaces remain as clean as possible to reduce the transmission of infection. The volunteer cleaning protocols distributed by the Diocese are found in Appendix D of this Safety Plan.

All staff engaged in cleaning (including the handling of soiled laundry or waste materials) should wear a mask and disposable gloves. In addition, hand sanitizer should be available throughout the performance of their duties if handwashing is not readily available. Masks are to be disposed of when dirty or no later than the end of the day. Gloves should be changed as often as necessary (usually at the end of any task or after cleaning a washroom facility).

All surfaces (floors, seating, kneelers) are to be wiped at least once per week with warm water and an approved multi surface cleaner / disinfectant purporting to kill 99.9% of germs and viruses (note this would include products like Lysol, Pine-Sol, etc). It is recommended all pew fronts and the tops and sides of benches are to be wiped with a wood-friendly sanitizing agent after each event.

Cleaning Materials for Disinfecting

Difference between Cleaning and Disinfecting:

- Cleaning with soap removes dirt and grime
- Disinfecting kills germs
- We need to make sure we are doing both
- Use the right product correctly

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/COVID-19.html>

Disinfectant Hand Sanitizer Dispensing Machines

Each church should have a minimum of two of these devices at the entrance and exits doors of the church. Each parishioner should be directed to sanitize their hands before entering the church.

If possible, these devices should be touchless or operated with a foot pedal option if available and should be inspected before each celebration to ensure that they are filled and the batteries within them are operating. They should be cleaned and refilled before each liturgy. They should be inspected for use, cleaned and, if necessary, the content of the disinfectant receptacle must be replaced if it is empty before each liturgy.

Sacred Vessels

All sacred vessels used in the liturgy are to be cleaned with warm soapy water and hot rinse after they have been purified following each Mass.

Volunteer Cleaning Brigade

The pastor may solicit cleaning assistance from volunteers. The volunteers must follow the Volunteer Screening Guidelines for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough. (See Appendix D of this Safety Plan) The pastor should provide the volunteer cleaning brigade with the disinfectant cleaning materials, gloves, and a face mask and/or a face shield. The volunteer cleaners may request protective clothing which will be provided by the parish.

C. Set up the parish to control the risk of transmission.

Attend to the General Safety Matters

Prior to commencement of Mass, the ushers survey the church to ensure that sanitizing measures have been adhered to, all signage is adequately displayed and all social distancing measures are functional ie.: pew closures, floor markings, signage, etc.

Control the Number of Attendees

The capacity levels are designated in the legislation in force at the time. An usher or a volunteer is responsible for ensuring the church is not over capacity at any time.

Maintain Physical Distancing

In all cases, when community gatherings take place, or when individuals are using the church or other facilities, a physical two-meter (six-foot) distance, strictly maintained.

Direct Seating

Seating is staggered in patterns to promote two-metre (six-foot) distances. Seating patterns should avoid individuals sitting next to an aisle. Seats may be designated by tape markings.

Track Seating for Personal Prayer

Make “cards” of 6 inches by 6 inches or larger using colourful paper. These cards are available for individuals who come to pray at the parish and left behind when they leave to signal the need for a targeted cleaning of the area. The card is thrown out by the cleaner. They are not reused.

Manage and Post Directional Signage for Floors and Aisles

In high traffic areas (entrances and aisles) tape is used to designate spacing of two-meter (six-foot) increments and also indicate the direction of movement. The tape markings are inspected after every Sunday to ensure they are in good condition and remains visible.

Provide an Area for those with Mobility Needs

Those who attend church with a personal mobility device are placed in a designated area with sufficient space to allow a two-meter (six-foot) space between each person.

Follow Health Precautions in the Sanctuary

Seating in the sanctuary is arranged to ensure two-metre (six-foot) distancing.

Control Access to the Sacristy

Entrance to the sacristy is limited to those who are required to prepare for the liturgy. If the room is small and does not allow for the required distancing, one person at a time should use the room. All surfaces in the room are kept clean.

Small Chapels/Devotional Areas for Holy Adoration

Unless it is not possible to ensure two-metres (six-foot) distancing, small Chapels and Devotional Areas may remain open.

Confessionals and Reconciliation Chapels

Most confessionals and reconciliation chapels are too small to ensure physical distancing. A larger room in the parish complex will be used for Confession. A portable kneeler with a screen may be used by the penitent who wishes to remain anonymous, provided the penitent wears a mask and disposable gloves. The penitent should wipe the door handle with disinfectant upon leaving the room. Where physical distancing cannot be achieved, an impermeable screen is to be placed between the penitent and priest. The screen is to be cleaned between confessions.

Avoid the Distribution of Materials for Sale or Sharing

In order to avoid surface contact, printed material such as pamphlets and newspapers have been removed. Areas for the sale of religious articles are closed. Events for the purpose of selling items such as but not limited to Christmas cards, calendars, Holy Land items, etc. are suspended during the pandemic. Any such items not essential to the operation of the parish will not be sold at this time.

Overflow Crowds and Standing Room

This is discouraged unless there is sufficient space to allow for distancing and for aisles to be clear so that traffic is not impeded.

Close Meeting Rooms and the Parish Hall

All adjacent meeting rooms and the Church/parish halls are closed.

Remove and Store Hymnals and Prayer Books

The Hymnals and Prayer Books have been removed from the pews and safely stored.

Using Elevators

Only one person (with an assistant, as needed) is to use the elevator, preferably with an attendant who will ensure that doors and handles are kept clean after each use.

Parish Bulletins and Offertory Envelopes

Parishes may prepare paper parish bulletins and plan a touchless way to make parish bulletins available to parishioners. Similarly, for the distribution of offertory envelopes, parishes will do so in a manner that avoids touching and the gathering of people around a table.

Sunday Missals and Missalettes

Parishes can order missals and/or missalettes for parishioners and plan a touchless way to deliver the missals/missalettes. If the parish orders missals/missalettes, follow the same guidelines as noted above for parish bulletins and offertory envelopes. Advise parishioners that paper items left in the church during the pandemic will be collected and put in the recycle bin. Parishioners can order the Living with Christ missalette by calling 1-514-523-6222.

D. Modify the celebration of the Mass to control the risk of transmission.***The Assembly***

All in the assembly will wear a face mask. It is recommended by the National Medical Officer of Health to wear a three-ply face mask.

Ministers of Hospitality

Ushers or ministers of hospitality are present before Mass at the entrance(s) to the church to direct people to the hand sanitizers and to their seats while observing physical distancing. The ushers will be counting the parishioners entering the parish to ensure that the 30% building capacity limit is maintained.

Singing at Mass

Permission is given for the use of a single cantor at Mass. Group singing is still strongly discouraged. Anyone singing or playing wind or brass instruments should be at least 2 metres from anyone else and optimally separated by an impermeable barrier.

For more information, see: *COVID-19 Advice: Religious Services, Rites or Ceremonies, Ministry of Health, August, 2020.*

Prayers before Mass

Where it is the custom for the people to pray the Rosary or other devotional prayers before Mass, this practice continues.

The Priest

The priest celebrating Mass will wear a face mask during the liturgy unless he is reading at the ambo or praying at the altar. The priest will wear a face mask to distribute Holy Communion. The priest will wash and sanitize his hands before and after Mass, and before and after distributing Holy Communion. This hand washing is distinct from the ritual washings/lavabo that take place during the Mass. If the priest touches the hand of a communicant, he will stop the distribution of Holy Communion and resanitize his hands.

The Deacon

Deacons will continue to refrain from ministry directly at the altar: that is, the deacon should not prepare the chalice or raise the chalice at the conclusion of the Eucharistic prayer. The deacon may proceed with other aspects of his liturgical ministry, i.e. proclaiming the Gospel, preaching when assigned, announcing invitations during the Mass, assisting in the distribution of Holy Communion. If it is the custom, the deacon may also do the general preparation of the altar after the Universal Prayer, provided he is at a sufficient physical distance from the priest.

Entrance Procession

The entrance procession takes place directly from the sacristy to the sanctuary. If the sacristy is located at the main entrance to the church, every effort should be made to maintain physical distancing (i.e., by having people seated away from the centre aisle). Only the celebrant participates in the entrance procession. The Book of the Gospels if it is used should be placed on the altar before Mass. There is no altar server.

The Introductory Rites

The priest leads the Introductory Rites from the chair or the altar. If led from the chair, the celebrant uses a simple lectern for the Roman Missal.

Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word takes place in the usual manner. Only one lector proclaims the Scripture readings from the Lectionary already placed on the ambo. The lector is seated in the assembly. Following the second reading, the lector removes the Lectionary so that the priest (or deacon) can proclaim the Gospel. No candles are used for the Gospel. The Creed is professed and the Prayers of the Faithful are offered.

Children's Liturgy of the Word

The celebration of the Children's Liturgy of the Word is not permitted during the pandemic.

Offertory

The monetary collection is omitted at the usual time and the bread and wine are not presented in procession as usual. The collection is to be received at the doors of the church at the end of Mass where people can place their donations in baskets supervised by ushers from a safe distance. The bread and wine are placed on the credence table near the altar before Mass.

Credence Table

In addition to all that is needed for the Eucharistic Prayer and Communion, hand sanitizer and/or warm water with soap should be placed on the credence table to be used by the priest and ministers before and after distributing Holy Communion.

Vessels on the Altar

It is recommended, where possible, to place the ciboria containing hosts for the assembly at some distance from the priest's chalice and paten. If the ciboria have covers, these may remain in place during the Eucharistic Prayer.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharistic Prayer is prayed by the priest with the assembly making the usual responses and acclamations but without singing. Whenever the priest is praying with hands joined, it is important that his hands are not near his face.

Communion Rite

The Greeting of Peace is maintained; however, no sign such as shaking hands is permitted during the pandemic. A simple bow of the head or wave towards one's neighbour may be offered as a sign of peace.

Holy Communion is distributed by the priest and extraordinary ministers of Communion, if needed. All ministers of Holy Communion are to sanitize their hands before distributing the Eucharist. Concelebration is discouraged at this time. If it occurs, concelebrants are to receive Holy Communion from a separate chalice and paten. Only the celebrant, at this time, receives from the chalice.

The dialogue between the Eucharistic Minister and communicant occurs at a two metres (six feet) physical distance. After the dialogue, the communicant approaches the Eucharistic Minister who carefully places the Body of Christ in the communicant's hand without touching the person.

Upon the strong the recommendation of medical authorities, Communion is received only in the hand at this time. (Since each communicant has the right to receive communion either on the tongue or in the hand, the traditional practice of the option of receiving on the tongue will be restored as soon as the public health situation allows for that).

Communicants are instructed to remove their gloves and masks, using the straps and without touching the front of their masks, while the person ahead of them is receiving Holy Communion. If any contact is made with the communicant's hand, the priest must purify his hands in the lavabo bowl and then wash or sanitize his hands.

It is desirable that the priest remind the people that they are to place one open hand upon the other to reverently receive the Sacred Host.

The Precious Blood should not be received at this time. Communion is received under only one species.

As necessary observing all health precautions, ushers may need to direct people to the Minister of Communion to ensure physical distancing is maintained.

Following the distribution of Holy Communion, the remaining Eucharist is placed in the tabernacle in the usual manner. All vessels are placed on the credence table, to be taken by a priest or sacristan to the sacristy following Mass. There they will be washed with soapy water.

Communion to the Sick and Homebound

Extraordinary ministers of Communion to the sick who are duly appointed will bring a pyx to the Mass and will present it to the priest when they come to receive Holy Communion.

Concluding Rites

The concluding rites take place in the usual manner. Any necessary announcements may be made. In particular, people are to be reminded to place their offerings in the baskets provided and to follow the direction of the ushers or ministers of hospitality when exiting the church in an orderly way, while maintaining physical distancing. The priest will leave the sanctuary and return directly to the sacristy. During the pandemic, the priest will not be able to greet and bid farewell parishioners at the church doors. Parishioners are instructed to leave the church without congregating at the exit doors.

E. Modify other sacramental and liturgical celebrations and programs to control the risk of transmission

Drive-In Sacramental and/or Liturgical Celebrations

Appendix B of this Safety Plan contains the legislated requirements. For a Drive-In celebration, the parish advises the Office of the Bishop before proceeding and all pandemic health precautions are observed.

Baptism

The baptism of infants and young children is celebrated in the usual manner. In order to respect physical distancing and limit the number of participants, it is recommended that baptisms not be celebrated during Mass at this time. Nor are they to be celebrated communally, i.e., with several families at a time. With the exception of maintaining physical distancing among family and friends, and the priest or deacon washing or sanitizing his hands before and after the pouring of water and anointing, the Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated in the usual manner according to the Rite of Baptism. The water in the font is to be replaced after each baptism.

Reconciliation/Confession

Opportunities to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation are to be posted for the faithful. The place for the celebration of the sacrament must accommodate a physical distance between priest and penitent of at least 2 metres or 6 feet while honoring the privacy and seal of the sacrament. For those waiting to celebrate the sacrament, social distancing must be observed.

Christian Initiation of Adults

The Christian Initiation of Adults (including children of catechetical age) is celebrated during Mass, since the rite includes the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. The Reception into Full Communion is also to be celebrated during Mass. If there is a concern about the capacity limits, the pastor may decide to celebrate these rites outside of the Sunday Mass.

Marriage Preparation

During the pandemic, Marriage Preparation is offered online with a session via Zoom. <https://www.peterboroughdiocese.org/en/life-and-faith/sacrament-of-marriage-during-covid-19.aspx>

Marriage

Marriages may be celebrated with small communities, according to the number of people permitted by health authorities. The norms for physical distancing pertain to all present with the exception of the bride and groom.

Funerals

Funeral Masses may be celebrated in the church, according to the number of people permitted by health authorities. Priests and deacons will collaborate with Funeral Home staff to take all the necessary precautions to ensure the health and safety of all who participate.

Cantor Permitted at Weddings and Funerals

The use of a cantor at funerals and weddings is permitted, so that those liturgies may be celebrated with more solemnity. This will also allow a greater and more sensitive pastoral response to families as they gather for these liturgies. It is crucial that the musician and cantor should practice safe physical distancing from each other and from the congregation while carrying out their ministry. Since singing projects droplets into the air with greater force than speaking, the restriction on congregational singing remains in force. It would be advisable to announce that at funerals and weddings so that people are reminded that this restriction remains in place for the well-being and safety of all.

First Communion and Confirmation

The health precautions related to the celebration of the Mass apply to these celebrations.

Sacramental Preparation Programs

The sacramental preparation programs for First Reconciliation, First Eucharist, and Confirmation are offered online through the parish to which the child belongs.

- First Reconciliation
 - <https://www.peterboroughdiocese.org/en/life-and-faith/sacrament-of-reconciliation-during-covid-19.aspx>
- First Eucharist
 - <https://www.peterboroughdiocese.org/en/life-and-faith/sacrament-of-eucharist-during-covid-19.aspx>
- Confirmation
 - <https://www.peterboroughdiocese.org/en/life-and-faith/sacrament-of-confirmation-during-covid-19.aspx>

4. What will you do if there is a potential case, or suspected exposure to, COVID-19 at your church?

A. Contact Tracing

Risk Assessment Approach for COVID-19 Contact Tracing

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/main/2020/09/covid-19-contact-tracing-risk-assessment.pdf?la=en>

Each household of parishioners will be asked by the usher for the name and phone number or cell number of one member of the household for the purpose of contact tracing.

B. Symptoms of a Potential Case

Most viral pandemics involve fever since it is the body's reaction to fighting off infection.

In addition to temperature, other potential symptoms of viral contagion include:

- coughing and wheezing
- fatigue
- loss of appetite
- shortage of breath
- excessive sputum
- aching muscles
- headaches, chills, confusion, runny nose, shaking.

A combination of any or all of the above and a fever gives a strong inference to an underlying illness of which anyone should be concerned.

C. Reporting

Clergy and staff who exhibit any of the signs associated with COVID-19 should complete the Self-Assessment Test (www.publichealthontario.ca), get tested at a local site, and if positive - notify the Office of the Bishop. Similarly, volunteers and liturgical ministers should notify the parish priest of a positive test result.

Under no circumstances should anyone with present but undiagnosed symptoms awaiting test verification attend a church or have contact with other people until a diagnosis is confirmed.

D. A Potential Case

Should anyone present with COVID-19 symptoms and become ill during Mass, that is, the celebrant, those assisting with the Mass, and parishioners, they should be advised to leave and seek medical assistance.

E. Exposure to a Potential Case

Anyone who might attend to the ill person will wear disposable gloves a face mask and a protective face shield (if available), and should further wash thoroughly and secure a COVID-19 test.

The following are some examples and directions of what to do on encountering a pandemic contagion situation such as potential contamination of a church or parish/diocesan office. The guiding rules for these situations are effective care and responsible safety. Do not forego one for the other. It is always better to exercise caution and safe practices in these circumstances.

In all cases, immediately consult Public Health Ontario for reporting requirements and assessment of the threat.

While considerations of privacy must be respected, a positive duty must be exercised to advise people who may have been exposed to viral contagion, and a further positive duty exists to remove any such threat and take measures to bring the parish back to a healthy state.

For issues that arise that are not listed here, please contact the Office of Bishop Miehm for direction and advice.

F. Pandemic Infection of Clergy or Staff

If a cleric or staff member is ill with COVID-19, notify the Office of the Bishop. Clergy and Staff must seek immediate medical attention and follow any direction to self-quarantine or otherwise isolate. Any restrictions related to quarantine or the isolation of a cleric or staff member must be communicated to the Office of the Bishop.

Clergy or Staff so affected may not return to work until they have complied with quarantine regulations and are assured that they no longer suffer from the virus.

G. Pandemic Infection of a Parishioner

If you are advised that a parishioner who attended Mass has been diagnosed with COVID-19, such information should be confirmed. Once confirmed, contact should be made with the parishioner to express care and advise them to observe all health precautions and restrictions. Every effort should be made thereafter to follow-up on their health and express the pastoral concern of the faith community.

H. Notice to Parishioners

Parishioners should be advised of the sickness of their parish priest or a parish staff member but they must not be named. If the parish is contacted by the Health Unit about a cleric, staff member or parishioner who has become ill, the parish will comply to the best of its ability with the information request.

5. How will you manage any new risks caused by changes to the way you operate your pastoral ministry?

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough has a Pandemic Reopening Planning Committee chaired by +Most Reverend Bishop Miehm and comprised of eight clergy and five lay members to discuss matters related to the provision, continuation, and support of pastoral ministry during and after the pandemic.

The risks we foresee are:

- A diagnosed case or multi-person outbreak of COVID-19
- A diagnosed case or a multi-person outbreak of a variant of the virus
- A lag in the vaccine administration schedule
- Asymptomatic person to person transmission

At this time, the reasonably foreseen risks are managed by the ACBO WorshipSafe Committee, the development of the *Worship Safe* Manual for the Diocese, ongoing updates from the COVID-19 Reopening Planning Committee, the directives from the Bishop of Peterborough, the directives from Pope Francis and the Congregational Offices of the Vatican, the legislation from the province and the Orders issued by the Medical Officers of Health.

The Peterborough city and County Health Unit has designated a liaison for places of worship. This has been and continues to be an effective way to ensure the ongoing communication and collaboration necessary to manage new and emerging risks. The Diocese will check this resource webpage for emerging issues:

<https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-workplaces/>

If and when a risk emerges, it will be directed to the Pandemic Reopening Planning Committee for study, discussion, and direction. The Committee will collaborate with the partners named above to ensure the scientific, medical, pastoral, and prudent management of the risk.

6. How will you make sure your plan is working?

+Most Reverend Bishop Miehm established the Pandemic Reopening Planning Committee for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough two months into the early stages of the pandemic. This Committee exercises a vital role in the establishment of the plan, the monitoring of it and its updating as required and necessary.

SUCCESS CRITERIA FOR THE PLAN

Health Indicators

The absence of person to person transmission at the parish

Monitoring

Compliance with all health precautions as required

In order to provide assurance to the Government that Ontario Catholic churches will be abiding by best practices as are outlined in this manual, the diocese shall, from time to time, conduct inspections on an unannounced basis. Parishes that are non-compliant will be put on an improvement list with appropriate follow-up to ensure future compliance.

In addition, Catholic Mutual, (the insurance provide for the Catholic dioceses of Ontario) in the course of its regular inspections, has indicated that they too will review parish churches for compliance issues and report to the diocesan office.

Training and Reinforcement

Meetings via a network platform to review the health precautions

Video training

Ongoing circulation of Mental Health Resources

Communication

Internal communication is clear and timely

External communication is consistent and provides for a feedback loop

Attitudinal Indicator

A firm commitment to the good health of each person by doing what we can on a personal basis to keep everyone safe

COVID-19 Safety Plan – snapshot

Business name: Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough

Parish:

Date completed: February 15, 2021

Revision date: Prompted by the revision of legislation and new or updated MOH Orders

Measures we're taking

How we're ensuring workers know how to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19

- Regular screening
- Contact tracing
- Working from home as much as possible

How we're screening for COVID-19

- Online screening

How we're controlling the risk of transmission in our church

- Maintain Physical distancing of 6 feet or 2 metres
- Wear a face mask.
- Avoid or reduce in-person contacts with people outside the household.
- Wash and/or sanitize hands regularly and thoroughly.
- Clean high-touch surfaces frequently.
- Sanitize surfaces on a regular schedule.
- Optimizing the use of the technology.

What we will do if there is a potential case, or suspected exposure to, COVID-19 at our church

- Contact tracing will provide the information for proximate and necessary contacts.
- If so advised by the Health Unit, a general notice will be released advising of the suspected exposure and providing the MOH's information in that regard.

How we're managing any new risks caused by the changes made to the way we operate our business

- If and when a risk emerges, it will be directed to the Diocese of Peterborough Pandemic Reopening Planning Committee for study, discussion, and direction. The Committee will collaborate with the partners named above to ensure the scientific, medical, pastoral, and prudent management of the risk.

How we're making sure our plan is working

- Establishing and monitoring success criteria for the plan

APPENDIX A

PRAYER DURING A PANDEMIC



POPE FRANCIS OFFERS A PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY FOR PROTECTION FROM COVID-19

"O Mary, you shine continuously along our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the Cross was near to the pain of Jesus, keeping your faith firm.

You, Salvation of the Roman people, know what we need, and we trust that you will provide for those needs so that, as at Cana of Galilee, joy and celebration may return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the will of the Father and to do what Jesus tells us, He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and took up our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God. Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin. Through Christ our Lord, Amen."

APPENDIX B

ANNOUNCEMENT BEFORE/AT MASS

Welcome to the celebration of Mass at our parish! It is our hope that working together and looking after each other, we can stop the spread of this virus and join together in prayer safely.

This Announcement is a reminder for all of us.

It remains critically important for each of us to continue following the COVID-19 health precautions.

This includes:

- staying home when ill, even with mild symptoms;
- practising physical distancing of 2 metres or 6 feet with those outside your household or social circle;
- protecting your social circle;
- wearing a face mask that covers the nose, mouth, and chin;
- washing your hands frequently and thoroughly;
- collecting the contact tracing information; and
- adhering to gathering limits and rules.

The Ontario law 364/20 requires that **everyone attending the church must wear a face mask** – this includes the celebrant, deacon, and liturgical ministers. The only time the face mask can be removed is when speaking at the ambo, altar or presider's chair.

If a person has a health concern related to the wearing of the face mask, the law provides for this exemption to be respected.

This time of uncertainty calls each one of us to renew and amplify our Christian commitment to prayer, reflection, prudent care of each other, and helping others.

Let us continue to pray for those who have died, those who are ill, those who work on the front lines and serve our community, and the ongoing work of medical researchers.

May God bless us and guide us.

Updated December 8 2020

APPENDIX C

DRIVE-IN SERVICES

Drive in services are permitted with the permission of the Bishop in accordance with the legislation:

Gathering in motor vehicles for religious service, rite or ceremony

4. (1) This section applies with respect to gatherings for the purposes of a wedding, funeral, religious service, rite or ceremony if the persons attending the gathering, other than those conducting the service, rite or ceremony, do so in a motor vehicle.

(2) Clause 1 (1) (d) does not apply to a person who attends a gathering to which this section applies if the person follows all of the following precautions that apply to the person:

1. Each person attending the gathering, other than the persons conducting the service, rite or ceremony, must remain within a motor vehicle that is designed to be closed to the elements, except,
 - i. where necessary to use a washroom, or
 - ii. as may otherwise be necessary for the purposes of health and safety.
2. The driver of a motor vehicle must ensure that it is positioned at least two metres away from other motor vehicles.
3. A person who ordinarily uses a non-motorized vehicle because of their religious belief and who attends the gathering must remain within their non-motorized vehicle except where necessary to use a washroom or as may otherwise be required for health and safety, and paragraph 2 applies with necessary modifications.

APPENDIX D

Diocesan Protocol for Cleaning by Volunteers

- The Diocese and its parishes continue to comply with Federal and Provincial Legislative and Regulatory COVID-19 Guidelines. Every reasonable precaution has been and will continue to be taken by the Diocese and its parishes to protect the health and safety of those attending our locations. Enhanced Cleaning Protocols MUST be completed in our Churches, Buildings and Facilities prior to reopening to staff, volunteers, and parishioners.
- Stay home if you are feeling unwell, complete the self-assessment on the Ontario COVID-19 website at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>
- Please do not attend the parish church, building or facility if you are or have suffered from: cough, sputum production, shortness of breath, undue fatigue, loss of appetite, muscle aching, runny nose, chills involving shakes or loss of sense or taste or smell.
- During the Coronavirus pandemic, we ask that prior to entering your parish church, building or facility, you ensure that your temperature is less than 37.5 degrees Celsius.
- Sign in Book. All volunteers are required to sign in and out in Phases 2 and 3
 - To account for all in the event of emergency or evacuation
 - To give to Public Health in the event contact tracing is required
- Must sign declaration that they are free of symptoms and have not been in contact with a COVID-19 patient
- Parish Volunteers will be provided and asked to wear face masks for entry and exiting Parish church, building or facility. If it is deemed essential, Volunteers may be provided plastic face shields, this is not a requirement but shall be based on parish needs.
- Hand sanitizer stations and soap dispensers are ideally replaced with touch-free units – for use upon entry to buildings.
- Regular hand washing and wear gloves when handling cleaning products and PPE.
- Difference between Cleaning and Disinfecting - we need to make sure we are doing both
 - Cleaning with soap removes dirt and grime
 - Disinfecting kills germs
- Use the right product correctly, and make sure that you are following the instructions. Use the correct dilution and make sure the chemical is sitting on the surface you are cleaning for the right amount of time to kill the germs.
- *NOTE: Parishes may be required to accommodate employees or volunteers with chemical sensitivities, if applicable, please discuss this with the parish priest.

- Use a designated cloth for disinfection. Clean it after each use in hot water (60 – 90 C) with regular laundry soap, hang to dry.
- Do not dry dust or sweep, it may cause the virus to float up.
- Regular disinfection of touch points including light switches, door handles, faucet handles, garbage lids, washrooms, etc. dispose of the inside of the lined garbage bin
- Follow marked pathways or signs, where applicable.
- After a prolonged period of isolation there will be a natural inclination to socialize and catch up with others – avoid gathering in groups and remember to always maintain a physical distance of 2 metres/6 feet.

We thank you for your very kind support and adherence to the Diocesan Health and Safety protocols during this time, God bless.