



# St. John the Baptist Catholic Church

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## PARISH REOPENING PLAN

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan / Effective June 11, 2020

for Return to the Celebration of Public Masses

Effective on May 26, 2020 at 11:59 pm, places of worship, funeral homes, and other venues that offer gathering space for weddings, funerals, or planned services such as worship, rituals, prayer meetings, or scriptures studies, may host such weddings, funerals, or services with over 10 people, provided that they adhere to the following requirements:

- A. In all settings, ensure a minimum of 6 feet of physical distancing between households.
- B. In indoor settings, occupancy must not exceed 50 percent of the normal occupant capacity as determined by the fire marshal, with a maximum of 250 people in a single self-contained space. This includes leadership, staff and participants for all planned services.
- C. In outdoor settings, gatherings must not exceed 250 individuals.
- D. Develop and implement a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in accordance with guidance developed by the Minnesota Department of Health, available at:  
[https://mn.gov/deed/assets/worship-guidance-ACC\\_tcm1045-433301.pdf](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/worship-guidance-ACC_tcm1045-433301.pdf)
  - a. Every parish or institution must develop and implement a *COVID-19 Preparedness Plan* and designate and train a staff person to be the Plan Administrator. While there are many aspects of the Plan that fall outside these Directives on liturgy (staff safety procedures, work-at-home guidelines, etc.), the plan – including the name and contact information of the Plan Administrator – should be publicized to the entire parish online and in common gathering areas. ***St. John's PLAN is posted on the kiosk in the narthex of the church and in the staff kitchen.***

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- b. The Plan Administrator must ensure that all aspects of the Plan are observed in the worship space: hand sanitizers and cleaning supplies are well-stocked, liturgical personnel are observing social distancing, staff and volunteers are trained for their responsibilities, etc.

### I. INTRODUCTION:

- A. Our first consideration continues to be for the spiritual and physical health of our parishioners and those whom they encounter. All those defined by the health department as more vulnerable (i.e., 65+ years of age, those with compromised immune systems, those with underlying health conditions, those who are especially anxious about being in a large group, etc.) are encouraged to stay at home.
- B. Parishioners will be notified of PREPAREDNESS PLAN to return to public celebration of Mass with as much advance notice as possible. They will receive a letter from our Pastor

which will be distributed via postal mail, email, parish website, Facebook and YouTube sites. The letter will include information on the points below:

1. The obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains dispensed until further notice.
2. All COVID-19 positive persons, anyone showing any symptoms of sickness, or anyone who has a household member who is sick or showing symptoms of sickness should not come to church.
3. As much care as each person puts forth for your safety, individuals **do** put themselves at risk by attending Mass.
4. We will continue to post our weekend liturgies on our website and other social media for the benefit of the homebound and those otherwise vulnerable and unable to attend in person.
5. Seating will be limited for each Mass due to physical distancing.
6. All the faithful should continue to follow all posted signs concerning social distancing and hygienic practices.
7. We ask everyone over the age of 2 to wear a face covering over mouth and nose. We encourage you to bring your own from home but there will be some available at church – adult and children/youth sizes.
8. Please review our “**Re-Entry**” videos via social media prior to attending Mass.
9. Please do not engage in any physical touch, such as by greeting each other.
10. Collection baskets will not be passed by hand. Instead, wooden lock boxes will be located in the main entry and by door 4 (elevator entrance) so attendees can drop their weekly contributions in them before or after Mass.
11. All will be expected to cooperate fully with instructions from ushers and greeters.
12. There is no pre-determined timeline for how long restrictions will be in place; further developments may allow for the loosening of restrictions or call for the tightening of restrictions.

II. **PROTOCOLS** that must be followed for the safe celebration of Mass:

***Preparations before Mass:***

13. Our Pastor is part of a vulnerable population. Extra care should be practiced by decreasing interactions with him, when possible.
14. We will maintain our Mass schedule as follows:
  - a. Tuesday and Wednesday - 8:15a (*starting Tuesday, June 16*)
  - b. Thursday – 6:30p with 6:00p Reconciliation
  - c. Fridays – 10:00a, this is the Sunday Mass recorded for online viewing
  - d. Saturday - 5:15p with 4:30p Reconciliation (*starting Saturday, June 27*)
  - e. Sunday - 8:00a and 10:00a

- f. *If there is a funeral on any weekday, there will be NO Mass or communion service that day.*
  - g. If it appears over time that adjustments to the schedule may be needed, we will review.
15. Signage can be found on all entrance doors and must be followed, reminding
    - a. ANYONE with fever or flu-like symptoms not to enter the church;
    - b. EVERYONE to maintain safe social distancing of a minimum of 6 feet between people at all times, inside and outside. The only exception to the 6 feet social distancing is for people living in the same household.
  16. Entrance/Exit for Mass will be limited to doors 2, 3 (main entrances), and 4 (Parish Office / Elevator entrance) and doors will be propped open for better ventilation before, during, and after Mass, whenever possible. If doors cannot be propped open due to weather or running air-conditioning, ushers/greeters will hold doors open.
  17. The balcony and stairwells to basement will be closed off with twine and marked as “No Entry”. If tornado warning sirens are sounded, ushers will immediately remove these easy closures and direct attendees to safety in Matthews Hall.
  18. Every one of three pews will be available for seating. The 2 pews between are cordoned off. Ushers/greeters will assist attendees with seating, from the front to the back of the church, allowing for a minimum of 6 feet distancing on ALL sides, except for persons living in the same household.
  19. All Missals, hymnals, prayer cards and other paper resources have been removed from pews and kiosk/displays.
    - a. All are invited to bring their own Mass and/or prayer books from home if they wish. ***Anything left in pews/chairs after Mass must be discarded if we do not know who it belongs to OR it is not claimed within a week.***
    - b. Breaking Bread Mass missals are available for anyone to take home with them. Once they are picked up they CANNOT be returned and must be taken home or recycled. Individuals will be allowed to bring them back for personal use during Mass. A free will offering is requested for these books and can be found in the narthex.
    - c. A simple worship aid will be included in weekly bulletins for Sunday Mass celebration. They will include Mass prayer texts and a listing of scripture readings for the day. Bulletins/worship aids will be available for pick up at stations before Mass and must be taken home or recycled after each Mass.
  20. 5 Sanitizing/Miscellaneous Stations will be set up – 4 in the narthex (main entrance) and 1 at door #4 (Parish Office/elevator entrance).
    - a. 6 foot markings are provided on floor leading to each station for distancing;
    - b. “What to do” and other safety reminder signs will be at each station;
    - c. All attendees will be asked to stop at one of the stations to sanitize hands both before and after Mass.
    - d. Each station will include:
      - i. Hand sanitizer
      - ii. Fresh/clean, washable face coverings (for those who forget)
      - iii. Basket for used face coverings (we will wash those we provide)
      - iv. Bulletin/Worship aids

- v. Recycling bin for bulletins/worship aids after Mass
  - vi. Sanitizing spray for inadvertent contact, as needed, and for sanitizing pews and other touch points after each Mass.
21. All ushers and greeters must wear masks, maintain 6' distancing at all times, and must not make physical contact when greeting anyone. ***You can expect them to be enthusiastic, welcoming and joyful!***
  22. Restroom doors in the narthex will be propped open and users should follow safety guidelines posted just outside each restroom (as listed below).
    - a. Only 1 person at a time;
    - b. Wait outside restroom, safe distancing, until previous user leaves; see blue tape markings on floor;
    - c. Sanitizing wipes are available in each restroom for users to clean touchpoints prior to utilizing the facility if they choose to.
  23. Holy Water fonts and baptismal fonts will remain empty.

***During Mass:***

24. Instrumental music may be included at some or all Masses to aid in prayer. Singing will NOT be a part of our public Masses at this time.
25. Lector will make an opening announcement to set the tone for this different way of celebrating together. Clear procedures and expectations put people at ease.
26. There is to be no presentation of gifts or collection/offertory during Mass.
27. Celebrant will invite attendees to share sign of peace verbally, with a wave, or some other ***non-touch greeting***.
28. After the celebrant receives both the Body and Blood of Christ, he will share the following reminders/announcements:
  - a. Communion will be distributed AFTER the Final Blessing;
  - b. The faithful are reminded that no one is obliged to receive communion,
    - i. Christ is encountered in those gathered in his name,
    - ii. in the proclamation of the Word,
    - iii. and especially by joining themselves to the offering of Christ to God the Father during the Eucharistic Prayer.
    - iv. The benefits of Spiritual Communion remain even at public Masses.
  - c. Those refraining from the Eucharist are invited to pray the Prayer of Spiritual Communion, found in worship aid, with Lector;
  - d. After the prayer and final blessing you may kneel or be seated as celebrant leaves the sanctuary;
  - e. Communion Ministers will come forward and Ushers will guide attendees to communion procession;
  - f. Attendees may receive Communion and then move directly to exit stations to sanitize hands and leave OR may return to their seat for quiet time in prayer;
  - g. Ushers will dismiss those remaining by row, starting from the back, practicing social distancing to sanitize hands again before leaving.
  - h. Please take all belongings with you and discard bulletins/worship aids or take them with you;

- i. There are 2 secure collection boxes in the main entrance and 1 at door 4 where you may drop your weekly offerings either before or after Mass.
- 29. All stand for Prayer after Communion and Final Blessing. Then, celebrant exits sanctuary.
- 30. Distributing Holy Communion requires special care. We must ensure reverence for the Blessed Sacrament yet retain social distance.
  - a. Our Pastor WILL NOT assist with distribution of Holy Communion during Masses.
  - b. Communion will not be distributed to the faithful from the chalice.
  - c. Communicants may only receive Eucharist on the hand for the health and safety of both the minister and faithful during these unprecedented days of the pandemic.
  - d. Communion ministers will enter sanctuary, one by one, to receive vessel and move to stations.
  - e. Those interested in receiving Holy Communion will be guided to procession, by ushers, in single-file line to each minister, keeping required distance between themselves. Pew sections 1 and 3 (from left to right when facing altar) will receive first, followed by sections 2 and 4 to minimize passing in aisles.
  - f. Additional sanitizer is available on stand near each aisle for Communicant use just prior to receiving.
  - g. Communicants should:
    - i. Approach minister wearing your mask
    - ii. Extend both hands, palms up, far in front of you
    - iii. Keep your mask on and reply "Amen" when the minister says "the Body of Christ"
    - iv. Remain still as the minister places the Host in your hand
    - v. Step 6' to side, raise or lower mask to consume the Host, replace mask and return to pew via established path.
  - h. Low-gluten communion will be available in the center of the sanctuary for those who require it.
  - i. All Communion Ministers will:
    - i. wear a mask at all times during distribution;
    - ii. approach the altar from the left, one at a time, after celebrant leaves the sanctuary;
    - iii. receive vessel and move to station;
    - iv. set vessel on corporal, remove cover, sanitize hands before distribution;
    - v. set vessel down to re-sanitize hands again whenever/if inadvertent contact is made with communicant, or if they cough or sneeze;
    - vi. have sanitizer available at table in front of them;
    - vii. after procession, share the Body of Christ with each other
    - viii. sanitize hands again after distribution
    - ix. cover and return vessels to the tabernacle, one at a time.

31. All vessels containing the bread and wine are to remain covered even when placed on the altar and during the Eucharistic Prayer.
32. Pastor will prepare, place, purify and sanitize his own ritual books, communion vessels, and cruets before and after Mass.

**After Mass:**

33. There are 2 secure collection boxes in the main entrance and 1 at door 4 where you may drop your weekly offerings, either before or after Mass.
34. Ushers will assist those attendees wishing to receive Communion.
35. Ushers will assist attendees in exiting from pews, back to front, reminding them to again stop at sanitizing station for protocols.
36. When all attendees have left, 2 ushers will retrieve collection/offerings from lockboxes and follow protocols for securing them.
37. High use areas in the church will be sanitized after each Mass.
  - a. Teams of 2-4 people, **wearing vinyl cleaning gloves**, will:
    - i. Spray sanitize the seats, backs, arms, and kneelers of every usable pew and chair in nave and narthex.
    - ii. Spray sanitize Presider's chair, ambo, and ambo mic windscreen (gently remove before lightly spraying, and replace after), entrance door handles and push plates (doors 2, 3, and 4), inside and outside.
    - iii. Spray sanitize restrooms in narthex and office hallway – spray faucets, sinks, soap and paper towel dispensers, countertops, toilet seats and backs, toilet paper dispensers, stall locks and doors, and toilet flush handles;
    - iv. Clean 5 check-in/-out tables:
      1. recycle remaining bulletin/worship aids;
      2. combine all USED face coverings into one basket and take to laundry room to be washed;
      3. Spray/sanitize baskets that held USED face coverings;
      4. Discard used gloves in the trash.
  - b. Restrooms will be fully cleaned with soap and water weekly.
  - c. Restrooms will be sanitized daily during the week.
  - d. Narthex, nave, and sanctuary floors will be cleaned and sanitized weekly.
38. Based on the parish's COVID-19 preparedness plan, team leaders will sign PLAN logs to document adherence to the protocols within the preparedness plan.