** St. Polycarp Church**

**Reopening Guidelines**

**June 2020**

**Should I come to Mass?**

Please keep in mind that the dispensation of the obligation to attend Sunday Mass issued March 12, 2020 remains in effect for the Diocese of Wilmington.

For your own safety as well as the safety of the entire congregation, anyone with pre-existing chronic medical conditions is strongly encouraged to stay home and view mass online for the current time. St. Polycarp Church and the Diocese of Wilmington will continue to stream masses online each week.

*Pre-existing chronic medical conditions would include the following:*

* COPD, asthma, or other pulmonary disease
* Autoimmune Disorders - conditions such as Lupus, Crohn's Disease, Ulcerative Colitis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Psoriasis, Graves' Disease, Hashimoto's Thyroiditis, Multiple Sclerosis, and many others, in which the body manufactures antibodies that attack itself.
* Heart Disease
* Diabetes
* Severe Allergies
* Chronic Kidney Disease
* History of malignancy
* Immuno-compromised conditions - Any condition or treatment which would be predicted to decrease the individual's ability to fight infection.

Those over the age of 65 are also strongly encouraged to stay home.

***For the safety of the entire St Polycarp family, these criteria must apply to all members of the congregation, from Parishioner to Pastor.***

**HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO ATTEND EACH MASS?**

Due to social distancing requirements and other strategies to reduce the transmission of the coronavirus, St. Polycarp Church will only be able to accommodate a small percentage of the normal number of parishioners who attended Mass prior to the pandemic. As a result of space limitations resulting from the approximately 75% reduction in available seating in the pews due to social distancing, only a maximum of ***fifty*** parishioners will be able to safely attend each Mass.

Pew restrictions will be implemented to allow families to sit together while maintaining 6 ft distancing between non-family members.

In order to celebrate Mass safely, any parishioners desiring to attend Mass must make a reservation between 12:00 am Wednesday and 11pm, Thursday prior to the desired Mass date in order to request a reservation.

You must arrive early to Mass. If you arrive less than 5 minutes before Mass, your seat may have been forfeited. Parishioners arriving to Mass without prior confirmation, will not be allowed to enter. Although implementing such a policy is regrettable, it is essential nonetheless to help ensure the safety of the entire congregation.

**HOW DO I MAKE A RESERVATION?**

**REGISTER ONLINE** Wednesday mornings beginning at 12:01 am through 11 pm Thursday nights for the upcoming weekend. Reservations are to be made weekly for that coming weekend. The following two links will be available each week. The links do not change. (You do not have to have an account with Faith Direct or sign up for it when making a reservation.)

**FOR SATURDAY 4pm MASS**, click on the following link between Wednesday mornings beginning at 12:01 am through 11 pm Thursday nights.

<https://membership.faithdirect.net/events/details/4404> (You will need to copy and paste this link.)

**FOR SUNDAY 10:30 am MASS**, click on the following link between Wednesday mornings beginning at 12:01 am through 11 pm Thursday nights.

<https://membership.faithdirect.net/events/details/4487> (You will need to copy and paste this link.)

**PHONE RESERVATIONS:** Phone reservations will be accepted by calling the office at (302) 653-8279 on Wednesday mornings between 9 am and Noon. The office remains closed at this time. Please do not call the office during this time unless you are calling to register for Mass for the coming weekend (or if you have an emergency).

No reservations will be accepted at other times.

**WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT WHEN I ARRIVE FOR MASS?**

Even before you leave home, preparations should begin for attending Mass. Assess your health. If you are having any symptoms, stay home. Use the bathroom as bathrooms will be unavailable on our campus. Wash your hands, have your mask ready.

Only bring into Church that which is essential or extremely necessary. All purses, cell phones, and other personal items that cannot be carried in one's pockets should remain in your car or at home. Any "absolutely essential" items that cannot be carried in your pockets should be placed in a sealed plastic bag that can be easily and safely disposed of once you return home.

We haven’t been with our parish family for a while. Please remember to maintain social distancing in the parking lot. Please no hugs, handshakes, high fives, fist bumps, etc. Masks are required, so now is the time to put it on.

No one will be allowed to enter the Church without a mask or other satisfactory face covering which must be worn for the entire Mass, the only exception being for the consumption of The Eucharist. Masks or alternative face coverings must be worn to cover the nose and the mouth.

Prior to the beginning of Mass, all doors will remain open to prevent as many people from touching the door handles as necessary. In case of rain, Greeters or ushers will be at doors to open them.

Only two entrances will be used: the side parking lot entrance and the main double do or entrance.

**HOW WILL I KNOW WHERE TO SIT?**

Teams of Greeters/Ushers will be assigned at each entrance. They will escort you to your seat.  ***No one will be given the option to sit in their favorite seat. Once seated we require that you do not trade seats or try to move to another pew.***

Parishioners entering from the side parking lot will be met by a Greeter and then follow the instruction given by the Usher to turn right and use the side aisle along the wall. The next parishioner will be allowed to enter only after the Usher has confirmed the requisite 6 ft. distance can be maintained. ***Parishioners will be seated sequentially from Back to Front on the Blessed Virgin Mary side.***

Parishioners entering the building through the main double doors will be met by a Greeter who will instruct people to turn right and follow the direction of the Usher along the wall to the designated pew. ***Parishioners using the main entrance will be seated on the SJ side from Front to Back*** to minimize risk of exposure to parishioners previously seated

Parishioners who are receiving communion on the tongue or have a gluten allergy must use the entrance from the parking lot. Please notify the greeter of you communion request and need for special seating.

**What else should I know?**

**All restrooms will be unavailable prior to, during, and after Mass.**

The “Cry Room” will be unavailable prior to, during, and after Mass.

All missals will be removed from the pews prior to opening, as will bulletins and any materials usually found in the vestibule area. Bulletins will remain accessible online, as well as in the designated boxes located in the entrance vestibules. Music selected will be traditional songs with which most parishioners will be familiar.

Two Offering containers will be located at the entrances inside the building with a sign identifying them as repositories for Offertory envelopes.

For now, candle lighting sticks will be removed.

**Distribution of Communion**

Communion will only be under one species, the Host.

Receiving in the hand is preferred during this time. No one can receive The Eucharist in a gloved hand.

***Since we are requiring hands to be ungloved to receive the Eucharist, parishioners should be required to cleanse hands with hand sanitizer prior to receiving Eucharist to reduce risk of viral spread.***

Parishioners will remain in their pews to receive Communion. Eucharistic Ministers will bring Communion to you by walking through the empty pews.

Hand sanitizer will be used by EMs prior to distributing Communion and EMs must enter the sacristy and wash their hands with soap and water after distribution prior to returning to their seats.

Parishioners must remain masked while in Church, removing the mask only enough to place the host on their tongue then repositioning the mask or face covering to cover both nose and mouth.

**HOW DO WE EXIT AFTER MASS IS OVER?**

After mass the Ushers/Greeters will direct rows in exiting, emphasizing social distancing during the process. The Blessed Mother sided will exit through the door they entered starting with the pew closest to the Altar. The St. Joseph side will exit through the double doors through which they entered starting with the pew closest to the rear. Exiting will occur by the side of the pew closest to the walls on both sides. T***he center aisle will not be utilized by Parishioners during entrance or exiting.***

***Please remember to maintain social distancing even after leaving the Church.***