



## Church of St. Patrick COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

June 1, 2020  
Updated May 28, 2021

Executive Order 20-40, issued by Gov. Tim Walz on April 23, 2020, requires each business in operation during the peacetime emergency establish a “COVID-19 Preparedness Plan.”

The Church of St. Patrick’s COVID-19 Preparedness Plan documents policies, practices and conditions to meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines for COVID-19 and federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards related to worker exposure to COVID-19.

This plan has the strong commitment of management and it has been developed and implemented with the participation of staff and volunteer leaders. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, in consultation with MDH, has the authority to determine whether a plan is adequate. Note: Houses of worship have been designated “essential” and as such, are already considered open. Management decided to prepare a plan like other businesses that are required to submit plans.

It is important to remember how the Coronavirus spread around the world and through our community. This is an extremely contagious virus and we need to take every precaution to prevent its continued spread. Keep in mind that any public place you enter potentially exposes you to this virus. As we come together as one spiritual family, we will be vigilant with our efforts in regards of cleanliness and virus/germ transmission awareness while cautioning that we cannot guarantee you will not be exposed while in our building. The following information should be reviewed by every member of our spiritual family and we ask that you help us implement and enforce these guidelines in order to do our best to keep you and others safe.

An inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists anywhere people are present. COVID-19 is an extremely contagious disease that can lead to severe illness and death. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, senior citizens and people with underlying medical conditions are especially vulnerable to COVID-19. Church of St. Patrick has undertaken precautionary cleaning, disinfecting, and implemented social distancing guidelines to help reduce the risk of exposure. However, Church of St. Patrick cannot guarantee that visitors are 100% safe from exposure to COVID-19. Attendance at liturgies is at your own risk.

This plan includes descriptions of how The Church of St. Patrick will implement at a minimum the following:

1. infection prevention measures;
2. prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
3. engineering and administrative controls for social distancing;
4. housekeeping, including cleaning, disinfecting and decontamination;

5. communications and training for managers, staff and volunteer workers necessary to implement the plan; and
6. provisions for management and supervision necessary to ensure effective ongoing implementation of the plan.

We will continue to seek input from the **Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or the Minnesota Department of Health websites** for the most up to date recommendations and make changes as needed.

**Mask and Distancing Requirement to End May 28:** Based on guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health, the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis and the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Church of St. Patrick will no longer require masks for fully vaccinated individuals who wish to attend meetings, daily and weekend Masses, and visit our campus beginning May 28, 2021. In addition, social distance and capacity requirements will be lifted beginning May 28, 2021. Gatherings involving primarily children and youth will continue to require face masks as directed by the organizations listed above. For more information, please contact the parish office. Visitors to St. Patrick's Church are welcome to wear masks as they feel comfortable. Current facility cleaning and sanitization protocols will remain in effect until further notice.

**The following changes will help facilitate a healthy worship space:**

- We are cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces regularly.
- The church space and door handles will be sanitized before and after each Mass.
- The holy water fonts will remain empty.
- All hymnals have been removed.
- We have ordered hand-sanitizing stations to be installed at our two main entrances. Please bring your own hand sanitizer if possible. We have a limited amount on site but ask that you help us stretch this supply.
- If a staff member or any member of their household develops symptoms of COVID-19, they will contact the Business Administrator with daily or weekly updates on their health status, depending on the severity of the situation. That staff person will not be allowed to return to the building until 14 days after all symptoms have cleared for themselves or their household. (Updated December 7, 2020) Please see MDH Guidance below on pages 10, 11 and 12.
- If it is determined that a staff person or someone visiting our building has been exposed, we will notify our faith community so you can be aware of possible exposure. We will not provide the name of the individual but the day/time the exposed person last visited the building so others that may have been exposed are aware.
- We have posters in the common areas of our buildings reminding everyone to wash their hands and cover their cough.
- We ask that you follow the seating guidelines and maintain a safe distance.

**Considerations and a Plan to Reopen for Public Masses**

During this time, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass continues to be lifted by Archbishop Hebda.

We will continue to record Sunday Masses. To protect people's health and well-being, we encourage people in vulnerable categories to participate in Mass by viewing recordings.

These are initial protocols and procedures, which we will adapt as the situation changes.

Our protocol will be very clear and precise and we need to commit to it.

**The following guidelines are recommended for all those that attend Mass or visit and/or work in our building:**

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- We invite you to let us know if you are sick so we can pray for you while you remain home to recover.
- If you have underlying health risks, we recommend that you stay home until a vaccine for this virus is available.
- 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.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth as much as possible.
- Cover your cough or sneeze into a tissue or your elbow vs. your hand (you can spread germs when touching items after coughing or sneezing into your hand).
- Wash your hands for a minimum of 20 seconds before eating, or after blowing your nose, coughing, and sneezing. If soap and water is not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- Please do not engage in any physical touch when greeting each other. Instead, consider an appropriate non-physical action such as a nod.
- If you become ill within 48 hours of being in our building, please call the parish office and notify us when you were here so we can determine who else may have been exposed.
- Some of you are at very low risk of complications from this virus or other illnesses. Please be mindful and considerate of those around you that may not be.

### **Weekday Masses**

- The Holy water fonts will remain empty and no literature will be available in the racks.
- For their safety and that of others we will ask guests to sanitize their hands upon entering.
- Guests will only be able to sit in clearly marked, designated spots. They will be asked to go their chair directly upon entering.
- After Mass people are asked to leave the chapel immediately.
- After Mass the places where people sat as well as the doors used for entering and leaving will be sanitized.

## **Sunday Masses**

- One Mass will be recorded and available on the parish website on Sunday.
- For their safety and that of others we will ask guests:
  - To sanitize their hands upon entering
- Guests will only be able to sit in clearly marked, designated spots. They will be asked to go to their pew directly upon entering.
- For the reception of Holy Communion:
  - Distance markers will be put on the floors in the aisles.
  - Guests will be asked to follow directions by the presider given before communion.
  - A spot will mark where people stand to receive communion.
  - In addition to the celebrant, a second person will hand out communion.
  - Communion ministers will sanitize their hands before Communion.
  - Should someone present themselves wanting to receive on the tongue the communion ministers will sanitize their hands after giving communion.
- After Mass people are asked to leave the church immediately using the doors located for exit only.
- After Mass the places where people sat as well as the doors used for entering and leaving will be sanitized.

## **Weddings and Funerals**

Will use the same guidelines set forth for Sunday Masses.

## **Confessions**

Confessions will continue on Saturday at 4:00 PM inside the Chapel.

## **Sacrament of the Sick**

Requests will be handled on a case by case basis by Fr. Brian.

## **Choral groups**

Due to the documented health issues with transmission of COVID-19 with choir rehearsals and singing, choirs will not be used at this time. Six feet social distancing is inadequate for singing. We anticipate that choral volunteers will be one of the last groups to return because of the serious health risks for singers.

## **Plan for Volunteers to Return to St. Patrick's Church**

To protect the health and well-being of our staff, volunteers and guests, for the present volunteers will only be used for set liturgical needs. We anticipate that this will continue through the summer months. This policy will be revisited regularly as more is learned about COVID-19.

Staff will submit a proposal for review if they want to bring volunteers back to the campus and this must happen prior to inviting any volunteers. These requests will be handled on a case by case basis, and must offer plans for social distancing and adherence the COVID-19 preparedness plan to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Proposals will be reviewed, and Fr. Brian will make the final decision.

## **Volunteer Code of Conduct**

*“At this time, as indications emerge for a way out of quarantine, we pray that the Lord will grant us the grace of prudence and obedience to these indications, so that the pandemic does not return.”*

*- Pope Francis via Twitter, April 28, 2020*

As an addendum to the general Code of Conduct for volunteers at the Church of St. Patrick, during the extraordinary time of this COVID-19 pandemic volunteers coming to St. Patrick’s campus are required to adhere to additional standards and protocols for the safety of all persons on campus and for the common good. These prudent actions are at the very heart of our mission to seek the well-being of our city and parish community.

In an abundance of caution, and following the recommendations of the CDC and MDH, we recommend anyone in these categories should refrain from in person volunteer ministry at this time, with our deep gratitude and utmost respect:

1. Persons in a higher-risk category or serious underlying conditions including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised due to chemotherapy for cancer and other such conditions requiring therapy.
2. Anyone who has experienced symptoms including cough, cold, flu, fever of 100°F or more, shortness of breath, sore throat, or a loss of taste or smell.
3. Anyone in regular contact with a person in high-risk category who might bring COVID-19 back to this person.
4. Anyone not currently comfortable with in-person volunteerism for any reason.

Everyone has different parameters and standards for their personal safety in these unprecedented times, and volunteers may opt out of any service for any reason. We respect your personal decisions and honor your safety decisions. Any volunteer serving The Church of St. Patrick agrees to the following:

### **Standards for All Personal Interactions**

1. Volunteers are on campus (including any Church of St. Patrick buildings and surrounding outside grounds) for scheduled volunteer activities only. Using Church of St. Patrick spaces for socializing is not currently permitted, even outdoors.
2. Volunteers will practice social distancing and remain at least six feet away from any other person while on campus.
3. Volunteers will wash their hands with soap and water upon arrival and before departing, and before and after eating or after using the toilet, and will use hand sanitizer frequently, especially after touching their face, coughing/sneezing, etc.
4. Volunteers will be attentive to the surfaces and items they touch, keeping physical contact to a minimum as much as possible.
5. Volunteers will alert staff to any concerns or areas in need of cleaning.
6. Volunteers understand that each person has different parameters and standards for personal safety, and will respect the wishes of others for distance and caution.

7. Volunteers will articulate their concerns directly and compassionately, should another party infringe upon their personal comfort zone. Clear but caring communication is appreciated. (i.e.: I would feel better if you would step back.)
8. Volunteers will accept redirection and concerns about personal safety with compassion and respect.

### **Reporting Misconduct**

1. Please share with your volunteer supervisor, or any staff person on duty if you have concerns.
2. Staff will do their best to rectify the situation as quickly as possible.

### **Acknowledgement and Consent**

I am a volunteer serving The Church of St. Patrick and have read this Pandemic Code of Conduct for Volunteers and I agree to abide by it. I understand that I may face consequences of discipline, up to and including removal from service and/or termination of my volunteer role, for violations of this Code.

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### **Church of St. Patrick Obligations for Volunteer Re-Engagement**

Just as volunteers have obligations for the safety and well-being of themselves and others, The Church of St. Patrick has an obligation to its volunteers, staff and other constituents to be prepared as much as possible before re-engaging volunteers and other people on campus. It is also important to establish criteria to help decide what is reopened versus what is kept virtual.

All volunteer activity will remain virtual until a proposal to return to the campus has been submitted for review, discussion and decision. The proposal must address why the ministry has to be done in person on The Church of St. Patrick campus. It also must outline how social distancing will be maintained and how cleaning and disinfecting will be conducted.

Some considerations before re-engagement of volunteers on the campus include:

- 1) Availability of adequate physical space for volunteer meetings or workspace to accommodate proper social distancing.
  - a) We may need to set room capacities.
  - b) This may mean that just a few rooms are available for groups of 10+.

Note: We may have a “rush” on these larger spaces and that could affect the ministries we are able to re-engage. Some ministries may need to stay virtual for longer because there aren’t adequate spaces to allow for proper social distancing.

- 2) Supplies, staffing and commitment to keep facilities clean between meetings/activities, and to provide cleaning supplies available for each space.
  - a) Hours of operation determined to be prudent with overhead costs.
  - b) The number of interested volunteers may exceed the number of actual volunteer opportunities as people are excited to re-engage.

- 3) How do we determine who can volunteer?
  - a) Need to make every effort to be fair, equitable and transparent in ways and methods used as volunteers are placed in volunteer roles.
  - b) Church of St. Patrick management is supporting virtual volunteer ministry but in person ministry is on hold through the summer months for the health and well-being of our staff, volunteers and visitors.
  
- 4) We commit to provide virtual opportunities for volunteering throughout all phases of this pandemic. This is especially important if/as we invite vulnerable populations to stay at home and refrain from volunteering.
  - a) Share resources and ideas for effective virtual ministry
    - i) What are others doing that could be replicated?
    - ii) Software and apps (Zoom, video sharing, others)
    - iii) All Staff meeting for sharing and best practices discussion
  - b) Provide clear directions and expectations for
    - i) Staff
    - ii) Volunteers



## **Appendix A – Guidance for developing a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan**

### **General**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV)

[www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus)

[www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

[www.dli.mn.gov](http://www.dli.mn.gov)

### **Handwashing**

[www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html)

[www.cdc.gov/handwashing](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing)

<https://youtu.be/d914EnpU4Fo>

### **Respiratory etiquette: Cover your cough or sneeze**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html)

[www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html)

[www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing\\_sneezing.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html)

### **Social distancing**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html)

[www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/businesses.html)

### **Housekeeping**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html)

[www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2](http://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html)

### **Employees exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19**

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html)

[www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/basics.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/basics.html)

### **Training**

[www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/about.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/about.pdf)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-small-business.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-small-business.html)

[www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf)