



SAFETY AT THE BASILICA DURING COVID-19

In order to ensure the continued safety of all our parishioners, and given the recent government loosening of Covid guidelines and restrictions, the Hamilton Diocese has provided us with updated guidance.

We have chosen to take a gradual and conservative approach over the coming weeks in terms of loosening our restrictions at the Basilica of Our Lady. This approach will allow us to course correct, as required, depending on case numbers, and guidance from Public Health and the Hamilton Diocese.

The following are the recommended changes from the Hamilton Diocese effective March 1, 2022, and additional guidelines and measures for the Basilica:

- **Capacity:** In accordance with the Public health and workplace safety measures, churches may open to full capacity (the same is true for Parish halls and other meeting rooms). Additional measures at the Basilica include:
 - Every other pew will remain blocked off until after Palm Sunday. The blue tape will be removed from the pews in time for the Easter Triduum.
 - All the doors of the Basilica will be unlocked as of Ash Wednesday, and the caution tape will be removed from the bottom of the South tower and Transept stairs.
 - Morning and Evening Prayer will return to the Crypt on the First Sunday of Lent
 - The current three Mass schedule on Sundays will continue until Pentecost. Providing things keep moving in the right direction, we will return to our 9:00 and 11:00 am Sunday Schedule on Trinity Sunday in June.
 - CWL, St. Vincent de Paul, Stewardship, RCIA, Knights of Columbus and other Parish organizations may resume in-person meetings in parish facilities. Any meeting larger than 15 people must be held in the Main Parish hall, or in the Annexe, not in the Newstead Room or the Office Meeting Room (Lourdes Room).
 - Food and drink may once again be served at Parish meetings as long as proper distancing is maintained. Masks may be removed only while eating or drinking.
- Attendees should self-screen for any symptoms prior to arrival at Mass
- Contact lists are not required
- Masks must be worn by all those attending Mass, two years and older
- Hand sanitizers should continue to be available to parishioners at church entrances
- The use of Holy Water is permitted
- Ushers may help parishioners with seating and traffic flow
- All liturgical ministers (Deacons, Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, Lectors, Servers, Music ministers) may resume – with attention to distancing wherever possible – vaccination is not required.
- Hymnals may be in place in the pews
- Congregational singing is permitted
- Choirs may resume provided that they wear masks when singing
- Cantors may be unmasked provided they maintain a 3 meter distance from others
- Children's Liturgy, if resumed, must include mandatory masking for the children.
 - At the Basilica, Children's Liturgy will not resume until September at the earliest.



- Minimal contact offertory collection is encouraged by ushers extending their baskets or by placement of the collection baskets at the doors. Passing the collection basket from person to person is discouraged.
 - At the Basilica, we will continue the current practise for the collection indefinitely.
- The sign of peace by shaking hands is discouraged at this time. It would be appropriate to resume this practice when masks are no longer required and people are more comfortable being in close contact with those outside their household
- Communion ministers are reminded to sanitize their hands before and after distributing to the faithful
- The pre-Covid 19 pattern for approaching the minister for Communion may be resumed; parishioners should be reminded to keep a respectful distance from those in front of them
- Communion in the hand is highly encouraged at this time. Those who wish to receive on the tongue should receive at the end of the Communion procession. Communion from the Chalice is not permitted at this time. Additional measures at the Basilica include:
 - We will continue to have only the current two stations for Holy Communion until Palm Sunday. The usual four stations, and form of the Communion Procession will return for the Easter Triduum.

Other Considerations:

- As long as we keep moving in the right direction, funeral luncheons may be resumed after Easter. At that point, we will discuss capacity limits in the Parish Hall.
- Parish events (Food & Friendship Sundays, Breakfasts, etc.) may resume after Easter subject to capacity limits.
- Planning may begin for outdoor parish events such as the golf tournament and picnic.
- Baptism Preparation will resume in-person after Easter.
- If volunteers are interested in resuming, or taking up the ministry, in-person Marriage Prep will resume in the Fall.

Let us continue to be united in prayer for one another, for all who are suffering in any way because of the pandemic, and the many people who are responding in love to those in special need at this time.

Updated: March 5, 2022