

## **Diocese of Hawai'i Covid Guidelines Update (09 March 2022)**

At the present time, it seems that the statewide indoor mask mandate will end at midnight of March 25. Things can always change (both for the state and for the diocese) with new scientific information or new surges, but in preparation for the state changes, I have asked the Worship Task Force to consider all possibilities, and I have determined that the following will be the new Diocesan Guidelines. You will notice that some have not changed but are reiterated for clarity.

Again, these guidelines can change as necessity warrants, so please be prepared and remain flexible.

- Masking indoors
  - As of March 26, 2022 (the mandate is lifted as of 11:59 PM on March 25), the Diocesan line is “Masks Encouraged” rather than “Masks Required” indoors on Church campuses.
    - Vestries and Bishop’s Committees have flexibility on this matter, and will have my full support. You know your space, and might determine that you need different rules for different spaces on your campus.
  - Singing, in pews and in procession, is now allowed with masks (no need to wait for 3/26).
  - Masks will not be required for singing as of 3/26, but special attention should be given to the worship space and the airflow before singing in procession and determining the number of verses of a hymn to be sung.
- Clergy Masking
  - Depending on the context and space, it may be prudent and a positive witness of care for the celebrant to wear a mask during the celebration of the Eucharist and administration of the Sacrament, even after indoor mask restrictions are lifted.
  - Please consider your context for other times masking would be prudent – think through the moments of your local liturgy, how close you remain to crowds, the comfort levels of your people. For instance, it would likely be a good idea in most instances for clergy to wear masks while greeting at the door.
- Social Distancing
  - Distancing should be retained based on the size of your indoor space and airflow.
- Outdoor Liturgies
  - Masks are already not required while stationary and not singing.
  - Masking is not required when singing after 3/26 given reasonable social distancing.
- Vaccination requirements
  - Vaccination is still required for those volunteers engaging at-risk populations (feeding ministries, Eucharistic Visitors, nursery attendants/teacher of those under five, etc.).

- Vaccination no longer required (but still encouraged) for other volunteers (e.g. lectors) given adequate distancing and air flow.
- Vaccines *can* still be required for new employees and specific volunteers in the local congregational context (that is no change).
- We acknowledge that there are many members of the Diocese who are still concerned; please be considerate of congregants who are not ready to participate where others are unmasked; there should be no “guilt” imparted to them.
- Other liturgical considerations:
  - The “common cup” is the most theologically consistent approach in the “Episcopal Branch of the Jesus Movement.” Please take note of the instructions in my fuller (non-pandemic-specific) [Diocesan Customary](#).
  - Receiving sacraments in both kinds (Bread and Wine) or just the one (usually just Bread, but occasionally just Wine) is acceptable. God’s people should be reminded that reception of the Bread alone is full and complete reception of the Sacrament.
- Aloha Hour
  - Fellowship time like Aloha Hour is allowed, especially if outdoors or in an open/well-ventilated indoor space. It might be prudent to consider using pre-packaged treats, so God’s people don’t congregate at the serving table or share uncovered food.

The Right Reverend Robert L. Fitzpatrick, Bishop  
The Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i