

May 21, 2021

Greetings, St. B's Family --

On Thursday, May 13, the CDC issued guidelines that fully vaccinated persons may now remove masks and forego social distancing in most indoor settings. Metro Nashville immediately followed suit lifting all mask and capacity restrictions effective May 14. Our Bishop has now written the clergy and senior wardens throughout the diocese two letters, one on May 6 lifting capacity and distancing restrictions, and another on May 14 lifting diocesan recommendation for general mask-wearing in our churches, both effective Sunday, May 16. Based upon these actions and after consultation with our team of medical advisors, the following is a *summary* of protocols that will go into effect on **Sunday, June 6**.

Beginning Sunday, June 6

St. Bartholomew's will continue to have two services throughout the summer months, both in the Nave — one at 9:30 a.m. with most of our existing Covid protocols remaining in place and one at 11:00 a.m. with fewer restrictions. We will continue to live stream worship at St. B's for the foreseeable future.

Effective Sunday, June 6, room capacity limits are lifted, and signups/reservations will not be required for any services at St. B's.

We are working to reopen the **nursery** and resume **coffee** on Sundays as soon as we have volunteers in place. Foodservice remains suspended at this time.

Protocol for 9:30 a.m.

- Masks and social distancing will still be maintained at this service as we move into summer. However, singing while masked will be allowed.
- Children age 2 and under are not required to wear a mask
- Those who lead worship from the chancel may remove their masks to read, preach, and pray. Musicians in the loft will wear masks to sing at this service.
- This service will continue to be **live-streamed**
- A **children's homily** will return to this service beginning June 6.

Protocol for 11:00 a.m.

- Fully vaccinated persons are no longer required to wear masks or maintain social distancing at this service. It is strongly recommended unvaccinated persons and those who are immunocompromised speak with their physician before opting to worship without a mask. Continuing to wear a mask if you are unvaccinated is also how we care for the children of our parish and those who cannot yet be vaccinated, as well as others who are at increased risk.
- *At this time, masks are required for singing at any service.* Please continue to bring a mask to this service so you can put it on to sing.
- You are, of course, welcome to wear a mask at any service if you choose, whether you are vaccinated or not. The CDC's recommendations are options, not obligations. We will simply not be requiring masks at this point at the 11:00 service. Children, 3 -15 yrs. are still expected to wear masks until they are fully vaccinated.

Weekday Services

We have been praying **Morning Prayer and Compline** on Facebook Live for fourteen months now. With the lifting of restrictions, it's time to amend these practices. We will resume Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer from the nave this summer once our team of volunteers is in place. As of June 6, we are suspending Compline online, but we expect it will return in Advent.

Spoken Eucharists continue every weekday at 12:15 p.m. Fully vaccinated persons are no longer required to wear masks or socially distance at those services. I do encourage people who are unable to come on Sunday to consider these services because the attendance is much lower, and it is easy to maintain social distance from other worshipers.

In Conclusion

We anticipate continuing to be a hybrid or "blended" congregation of vaccinated, partially vaccinated, and unvaccinated worshipers for some time at St. Bartholomew's. These protocols are designed to maximize the options available for worshipers, allowing people to come back in a way that is most comfortable for them. Last week, Robert Wright, Bishop of the Diocese of Atlanta, said the church must decide how best to "*honor both the freedom of some and the welcome of all, equally. In our enthusiasm, my hope is that we will not inadvertently shame people or develop two tiers of membership in Christ's church.*" That is my settled intention, as well.

Now here's where I ask something of you — **As we implement these changes in the summer months and move toward the fall, I need you to volunteer in any way you are able.** Can you serve in the nursery? Will you set up/clean up the coffee service? How about serving as an usher or greeter? Give a children's homily? Serve on the Altar Guild and help us set up between services? The staff and our existing stable of volunteers have done an outstanding job over the past year, but we are all tired and need some good relief pitching from a few strong arms! Please pray about volunteering in some way and reach out to me directly (swood@stbs.net) or to our Director of Community Life, Sally Chambers-Rhea (schambers@stbs.net), to get involved.

As I type these protocols, I am thinking of each one of you as you receive and process them -- every keystroke has been a prayer. I am convinced we are moving ever closer to the day we can worship without restriction in the way we have traditionally worshipped at St. B's. I praise God for the good news of fewer cases and effective vaccines, as well as for the goodwill with which you have borne up under all the difficult transitions throughout the past year. You have been so supportive of us as a staff as we navigated changing circumstances — sometimes rapidly changing ones — and I can't thank you enough for the care and concern you have extended to me personally. I look forward to worshipping together this summer, and I am always interested to hear of any way I can serve you better.

I commend to you and encourage you to read the complete document of protocols >>>[here](#).

Thank you for reading, and Happy (almost) Pentecost!



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