



Parishioner Guidelines for Returning to Public Masses at Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish

July 7, 2020

Welcome Home

As Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish prepares to enter Phase One of the gradual re-opening process - in time to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost (weekend of May 29 - June 1) - we share the following guidelines (coordinated with the Bishop's directives which can be found [here](#)) and ask that these be observed through the month of June or until further notice:

While many are eager to return to public Mass, ***there is an inherent risk with any public event (including religious services), and no one can be guaranteed absolute safety.*** Parishioners must acknowledge that inherent risk. While we are working to reduce the risk, there are no risk-free situations. Your presence at any public event constitutes your understanding and acceptance of that essential risk.

It is the expectation that parishioners and volunteers ***exercise good judgment and common sense.*** Any person(s) should stay home if they are feeling ill in any way, sick or have symptoms of illness.

All Catholics within the territory of the Diocese of Grand Rapids are granted a dispensation from their obligation of attending **Sunday Mass through July 31.***

Phase 1 Mass Schedule

Sign-ups are have been re-instated for the two most desired Mass times, Sundays 11:00 am and 12:30 pm through the end of July. Please try to keep distancing as designated in previous Masses.

- ***expanded Mass schedule*** - Daily Mass resumes Friday, May 29 and three Masses have been added to the weekend schedule.

- **attend appropriate Masses** - No more than 150 persons may attend any one Mass. As you arrive, you will be directed where to sit. **If the church is full, please plan to attend a later Mass.**
 - **Masses dedicated to the vulnerable**- The first two Masses listed below will be dedicated solely to the at-risk population and/or those who are otherwise considered 'vulnerable,' including those who care for them. MASK WEARING FOR ALL OVER AGE 2 WILL BE ENFORCED
 - Saturday 4:30 PM (low, OF)
 - Sunday 9:30 AM (low, EF)
 - **Masses available for the general population** - All others are strongly encouraged to attend one of the following four liturgies offered over the weekend. MASKS/FACE COVERINGS ARE REQUESTED FOR ALL OVER AGE 2 **Please make an effort to vary your Mass times each week if possible to give others a chance to attend the more desired times on Sunday of 11am & 12:30pm, thank you!**

PLEASE SIGN UP IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SUNDAY 11am or 12:30pm. Linked below:

- Saturday 6 PM (sung, OF)
 - Sunday 8 AM (low, OF)
 - [Sunday 11 AM \(sung, OF\)](#)
 - [Sunday 12:30 PM \(sung, EF\)](#)
- If you are having trouble “getting into” any available Mass, please feel free to call the parish office at 616-287-0256 and we will work with you.

What to Expect

- **arrival times** - Please do not expect to enter the church until 10 minutes prior to the beginning of Mass to allow time for disinfecting. Please wait in your car until then and practice social distancing (6ft apart) while waiting to enter the church.
- **confessions will be heard** in the courtyard weather permitting, and in the back confessional with added safety measures. Please wear a mask in the confessional.
- **one church entrance point for Mass** - We will ask everyone to **enter through Park Street** and **exit out the main doors** to Garfield Ave. We will post signs on all our church doors indicating where the entry door is and that all people who are sick or have symptoms of illness should go home.

- ***please ensure proper social distancing when choosing pews for Mass*** - Leave plenty of space between your families. Parishioners are expected to respect all signage posted near or around the church grounds.
 - ***hymnals have been removed from the pews*** - We will be releasing worship aids at a later date.
 - ***please do not leave anything behind*** – either on the pew seats, in the pew pockets or on any other Church surface.
 - ***heads of households are asked to sanitize their pew*** before leaving Mass.

- ***no-touch collection baskets*** - baskets will be placed at the center of the “pew” breaks to the right and left of center aisle. You are encouraged to use [Faith Direct](#) to make a one-time or ongoing offering.

- ***heightened cleaning protocols*** - no holy water in fonts, removal of all hymnals, missals, other worship materials from pews and elsewhere throughout the church. Frequently touched surfaces (wooden pew surfaces, restroom fixtures, door handles) will be cleaned prior to, in between and after Masses. Parishioners are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer will be available as well.

- ***strict social distancing*** - 6' (family members who live together may sit together without distancing); others are required to distance from them and from each other. Please maintain social distancing in all locations of our campus including the parking lot. *Note:* Even though you may want to, *please do not distance from your own children.* 😊

- ***volunteers must be healthy*** - Those assisting at Mass in any capacity will be asked to stay home if they have an active cough or fever.

- ***one more note about the use of masks*** - The Bishop is requiring all members of the faithful who are two years of age and older to bring and wear their own appropriate face covering to attend Mass. Parents, we know this may be hard with young children, please just try your best.

- ***Holy Communion*** will look much the same as before, you may not, however receive in the hand if you are wearing gloves. You will be released pew by pew for communion.

- ***Masses, funerals and weddings permitted*** - Attendance will be limited according to social distancing standards. Weddings and funerals in Phase One remain limited to the 6-foot radius social distancing rule for seating (max 150) and vulnerable persons are strongly discouraged from participating. All protocols for Sunday Masses will be followed at weddings and funerals.

Updates

- Until further notice, ***parish offices remain closed***. If you need immediate assistance or other parish business, please email ahiske@sacredheartgr.org or call 616-287-0256.
- Visit the Diocese of Grand Rapids [Response to COVID-19](#) for updates.

Thank you for your patience during this time and for supporting your parish!