



The Archdiocese of Regina

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Stage 3 Guidelines for Parishes

Once Stage 3 of Saskatchewan's Re-Opening Roadmap comes fully into effect on July 11, 2021, all public health restrictions will be removed, including gathering sizes and mandatory masking. Even when all public health restrictions are removed, everyone will have their own level of comfort with these changes. The following guidelines are offered for pastors and parish staff and volunteers to assist with the review of current practices as they discern the return to pre-pandemic local practices as of, or after, July 11th. Keep in mind that some government restrictions could return if case numbers grow again. Having the ability to be flexible on changes for the coming months would be prudent to consider in your plans.

Providing a welcoming, non-judgmental atmosphere for all will be an important part of making changes in parishes. This is an important time to use the consultative structures in your parish. Once decisions are made at a parish level, please communicate clearly what restrictions are being kept, which ones are ending, and which ones are being phased out. These will likely need to be repeated throughout the coming months as parishioners return.

Please remember that Stage 3 changes cannot be implemented before July 11th. If you have a Saturday evening Mass on July 10th, all of the directives for Stage 2 apply (mask wearing, attendance numbers, contact tracing, etc.)

Dispensation

The faithful continue to be dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation until September 1, 2021.

We encourage parishes to continue to live-stream Mass as they have been doing so those unable to attend in person can maintain a spiritual connection with their local parish.

Masking

Although masking will no longer be required under the public health order, some people may still wish to wear masks based on their own risk assessment and comfort level depending on the circumstances. Individuals with symptoms that don't require them to stay home should be encouraged to wear a mask at Mass.

Gatherings

Although physical distancing will no longer be required, consider spacing and separation for those attending Mass, meetings, or events through messaging or crowd control barriers. If your parish is able to, please consider removing the distancing in stages (ex go from using every 3rd row to using every 2nd row for the first week or two as people get used to going without distancing), or provide

spaces where individuals are still able to distance themselves if they choose. Individuals who are sick should not attend Mass or other gatherings.

Food may be served at gatherings. You are encouraged to follow appropriate food preparation protocols. Individuals who are sick should not prepare and provide food for gatherings.

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing will not be required.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

All washrooms and commonly touched surfaces should continue to receive enhanced cleaning and disinfection. Employees and volunteers should be aware of public health prevention practices, such as proper sanitization, guest interaction etiquette, and emergency response protocol.

Hand Hygiene

Maintain hand sanitizing practices that were implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic. Provide hand sanitizers, tissues, and waste receptacles. Individuals can also be encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer.

Holy Water Fonts

The use of Holy water fonts may be restored.

Sign of Peace

The Sign of Peace by shaking of the hands may resume at the comfort level of individuals in attendance. For individuals with cold or flu symptoms, shaking hands and other physical touch are not recommended. The Sign of Peace may be expressed with a bow or similar ritual gesture.

Singing

Choirs and congregational singing may resume. Individuals who may not be comfortable singing in a public gathering are welcome and encouraged to wear a mask.

Hymnals and Bulletins

The use of hymn books and the handing out of bulletins may resume.

Collection Baskets

It is recommended that the collection of financial donations remains unchanged for now and that baskets that are passed from person to person not be used.

Children's Liturgy

Since children under the age of 12 cannot be vaccinated at this time, it is suggested that if your parish decides to resume Children's Liturgy during the summer, the leaders and participants wear masks while gathering with each other. There may be an update on this as we hear what the schools will be doing in September.

Ministry Volunteers

In order to resume normal, or near-normal operations, engaging ministry volunteers is encouraged. This would include greeters, ushers, altar servers, readers, extraordinary ministers of communion, and other ministries that your parish had in place pre-pandemic. Individuals with cold or flu symptoms should refrain from serving as extraordinary ministers of communion.

Regular hand hygiene is encouraged for all staff and volunteers, either by hand washing with soap and water or using an alcohol based hand sanitizer.

Communion

All individuals distributing communion must use hand sanitizer prior to and after distributing communion.

Reception in the hand is to be the norm.

Reception of the Blood of Christ should not resume at this time.

Communion on the tongue may return and the priest should determine and communicate how this will happen. Hand sanitization should be increased for the priest, deacon, or extraordinary minister of communion who is distributing communion on the tongue prior to and after distribution. Individuals with cold or flu symptoms are to refrain from receiving communion on the tongue.

If you have questions, please contact Lisa Polk at lpolk@archregina.sk.ca or Fr. Brian Meredith at fatherbrian@sasktel.net.