

These requirements for participating in Holy Communion are based upon the Diocesan guidelines issued by the Bishop, as well as the recommendations from the CDC and federal and local governments. Our aim is to provide a safe environment for all worshipers by minimizing close physical interactions and potential transmission of droplets. St Philip's will hold two services of Holy Communion in the church (8:15 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.) on Sunday, September 27. A recording of the 10:30 service will be made available on Sunday evening on our Vimeo and YouTube channels. Guidelines for those attending worship in person are as follows:

PROTOCOLS FOR HOLY COMMUNION AT ST. PHILIP'S DURING COVID

Protocol at the altar

Before celebrating Holy Communion at the altar, the celebrant will sanitize his hands. While the celebrant speaks the words of the Eucharistic Prayer over bread and wine that he alone will consume, bread that will be consumed by other communicants will remain covered until being distributed (e.g. wafers in a ciborium with the lid on or covered by a pall, or bread on a paten covered by a purificator or other cloth). The celebrant and other priests distributing communion will use hand sanitizer after receiving communion themselves and before distributing to the congregation. If others assist in preparing the elements before or during the service, then face covering, hand hygiene, and physical distancing precautions should apply.

At the invitation to communion, when the consecrated bread and wine are shown to the people, only the piece of consecrated bread or wafer that the celebrant will receive is shown while speaking the words of invitation. At the giving of communion, the celebrant receives communion in both kinds. The celebrant alone will drink the wine, consuming all that has been consecrated. Once the celebrant has received Holy Communion in both kinds, he should put on a face covering and sanitize hands. Any other minister assisting with the distribution should then remove his or her face covering and should then sanitize hands before receiving the consecrated bread. The assisting minister should then put the face covering back on and sanitize hands again before receiving the ciborium or paten and moving to a station as assigned to distribute communion. All priests distributing communion at stations will keep their face coverings on at all times during distribution.

Holy Communion in one kind

At present, Holy Communion will be administered in one kind only—the consecrated bread—with no sharing of the common cup. Receiving the bread is considered canonically to be “Complete Communion.” In circumstances in which there is a reasonable chance of contagion, the canonical doctrine of necessity permits the reception of Holy Communion in one kind. Other such situations of necessity might include the inability to consume solids or, in the case of alcoholics, any quantity of alcohol.

Protocol for the distribution of Holy Communion

In order to avoid touching and to maintain physical distancing, communicants should not come forward to kneel at the altar rail, but instead they should follow the directions of the ushers to a communion station, forming a line (maintaining six feet distance apart) to receive the consecrated bread from the priest. Each communion station will also have a hand sanitizing station.

Each communicant should extend his/her hands to receive Holy Communion, with face covering in place. Both priest and communicant should take care to avoid touching hands. After the priest has placed the consecrated bread in the communicant's hands, the communicant should then take several steps to the side, lower or unloop his/her face covering, consume the consecrated bread, and then replace the face covering before moving back to his/her pew in the congregation. If the priest should by accident touch a communicant's hands, both the priest distributing and the communicant should sanitize their hands immediately.

We recognize that it will not be possible to maintain the ideal distance of six feet for the brief time that the priest administers the sacrament. However, the risk associated with this is relatively low, especially as both priest and communicant will be wearing face coverings.

Those in the congregation who prefer not to come forward to receive Holy Communion, as well as those who are participating in the service via video, are nonetheless still participating in a real Eucharistic assembly. Those who participate remotely in this way, but who are not taking the physical communion elements, are encouraged to participate in Spiritual Communion and to pray the included prayer for such circumstances. The term "Spiritual Communion" has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing physically in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ.

Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. —Romans 13:10