



St. Peter's Episcopal Church

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May 20, 2021

Dear Parishioners and Friends of St. Peter's Episcopal Church,

As many of you are aware, many Covid related restrictions are being lifted statewide and throughout our country. This, indeed, is a sign of immense hope. We are headed to a new reality and a new experience of life, hopefully with renewed and deeper meaning.

COVID-19 rates are declining and the vaccination rates are rising. This shows to all of us the importance of getting vaccinated. If you have not done so, we encourage and urge you to do so. There is now a walk-in site set up at the Former Circuit City site on State Road in Dartmouth. You can show up anytime during the day without an appointment.

We have not been together for the past 14 months so that we would protect one another. We have embraced a model of virtual online worship and have held our community together.

We recently we received an updated communication from the Bishops of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts allowing us to increase our seating capacity. So, we are increasing our Sunday morning seating capacity from 35% to 50% effective immediately. **As of July 1, 2021 capacity restrictions will be fully lifted.**

Below are updated practices that St. Peter's Episcopal Church will embrace based on our diocesan guidelines:

Here in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as throughout the country, we are deeply encouraged by hopeful developments in the pandemic struggle. New cases and COVID-19 deaths are declining; vaccination rates are rising. Last week the CDC announced that fully vaccinated persons no longer need to wear masks or physically distance in many settings.

Governor Charlie Baker announced on May 17 that all restrictions on businesses will be lifted on May 29, and that the face covering order will be lifted except on public

transportation and in healthcare facilities and other settings hosting vulnerable populations.

At the same time, we also know that there are still in our congregations many vulnerable persons who have yet to be vaccinated. For some, including our youngest members, the vaccine is not yet available; for others, underlying medical conditions or history make vaccination inadvisable. *We must still be vigilant to protect one another.*

- Effective immediately, and until June 30, **indoor in-person worship should be limited to 60% of building capacity.** This phase allows for continued expansion of vaccination rates, and the observation of any consequences following swift re-openings in other contexts. Capacity restrictions will be fully lifted July 1 unless statistics warrant a revision to this plan.
- We urge you to continue to observe **physical distancing between households** in order to protect those who are not yet fully vaccinated. Per CDC guidelines, **those who are not yet vaccinated should continue wearing a face covering and maintain physical distance.** We encourage all worshipers to maintain these precautions in order to protect one another.
- In the **sharing of Holy Eucharist**, we will distribute Communion only in the form of bread. The sharing of the common cup continues to be suspended.
- **Congregational singing by fully vaccinated people wearing masks** has been deemed by the CDC to be a safe activity. Accordingly, singing may be permitted by those fulfilling these conditions. Continued physical distancing is important for anyone singing.
- **Coffee Hour and the sharing/distribution of any food/drink** will continue to be suspended at St. Peter's until further notice.
- **We continue to urge vaccination** against the coronavirus for all our members as soon as they are eligible.

Thank you for your continue patience as we continue to regather as a community! The environment we have created here is safe and we look forward to you joining us in person when you are comfortable. Our live stream will always continue at stpetersdartmouth.org/watch or Facebook Live.

Peace,



(The Rev.) Scott A. Ciosek
Rector