



ST. MARY'S

ON THE HIGHLANDS

Protocol For COVID at St. Mary's

Due to significantly reduced positive cases in Jefferson County, and the state of Alabama, I have re-evaluated and adjusted the protocols for the buildings of St. Mary's. While I have not been able to accommodate every understanding of the pandemic, I have attempted to make good decisions and ones that would keep the entire congregation and those who visit us safe. Of course, safety also requires each of us to use our common sense. We will also be living into the directive of our Lord, "love your neighbor, as you love yourself".

COVID-19 Protocol as of October 19, 2021

Masking/Face Covering:

- As of Friday, October 22nd, St. Mary's on the Highlands will move to "mask optional" while inside the buildings. Unvaccinated and immune compromised people should be aware that we are operating as a mask optional community for worship, fellowship, and education events.
- Face coverings will be required on the children's floor, in atriums and in the nursery.
- I will continue to monitor cases and consider safety as my primary concern. If cases rise, we will return wearing face coverings while inside the buildings of St. Mary's.
- Those who choose to wear a mask will always be welcome in the community of St. Mary's.
- The members of the choir will continue to sing while wearing a face covering.
- Sunday 10:30 worship will be streamed each week.

Distancing: We will make a good faith effort to observe physical distancing. Close contact will be defined as those individuals who are within 3 ft for 15 min or more. We will continue to receive communion via intinction and those distributing communion will be masked at that point in the liturgy. Hopefully in the next four to eight weeks will return to the altar as an option for receiving communion.

Hygiene: Hand-sanitizer will continue to be placed around the church, as well as face coverings.

Other Measures:

- We will begin to add others into role of leading worship. This includes acolytes, Eucharistic ministers and additional choir members. This will be done slowly.
- We will begin to use processions into and out of worship.
- I am asking that groups who meet in the buildings of St. Mary's practice physical distancing. We have a beautiful new building that can accommodate groups who will spread out.
- We will continue to stream the 10:30 service on Sunday.
- Effective on Advent I, November 28th, I am hopeful we can return to as many face-to-face gatherings as possible for education and fellowship. I hope we are a place our zoom offerings are limited, and most people are back in the pews.

The past 22 months have been a challenge. I applaud your desire to stay engaged in the life of St. Mary's and your efforts to keep the faith. Your commitment has inspired me more than you will ever know. I believe we will look differently as we come out of the pandemic, but the grace of God is what we will continue to proclaim. Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and tomorrow.