



# OFFICE OF THE BISHOP OF NIAGARA

## ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

### General Pandemic Ministry Guidelines

#### GREEN STAGE

EFFECTIVE April 15, 2023

The pandemic continues to persist throughout Ontario and across the diocese. As such, the health and wellbeing of all people must always be put at the forefront of our decision-making process. We offer the following guidance, consistent with public health advice and the Green Stage of Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario's pandemic framework, confident in the knowledge that parish leaders and parishioners will make prudent and responsible decisions.

1. Clergy, staff, and parishioners are encouraged to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms and to stay home if feeling unwell.
2. Well-fitted masks, preferably medical masks or respirators, are encouraged to be worn by people if they feel it is right for them, are at high risk for severe illness, recovering from COVID-19, are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, as well as those ministering with vulnerable and/or unvaccinated populations, and in crowded, enclosed and close-contact settings. Masking continues to be required in long-term care and retirement homes.
3. Enhanced mechanical ventilation should be facilitated wherever possible, with HVAC system fans running continuously during activities to increase air exchange. Alternatively, or in addition, natural ventilation should be facilitated by opening windows and doors to the outside.
4. Hand sanitizer stations (with at least 60% alcohol content) should be placed throughout church buildings to assist with maintaining good hand hygiene.
5. Purificators should be changed regularly as the chalice is shared; communion assistants are encouraged to be masked while distributing communion. All vessels and linens set out for worship must be thoroughly cleaned after use.
6. Clergy and lay pastoral assistants who have symptoms of COVID-19 should refrain from providing in-person pastoral care to high-risk persons for a full 10 days after onset.
7. In-person pastoral visits with those who are self-isolating, those who have COVID-19, or those residing in facility where an outbreak has been declared are discouraged.
8. A service of Eucharist with spiritual communion may be livestreamed, either as a standalone online worship service or as part of a hybrid service with in-person and online congregations.
9. Vestry meetings are to be conducted in-person or virtually, in accordance with the [regulations approved by Synod Council](#) and published on the online diocesan COVID-19 resource hub.
10. Clergy are encouraged to seek guidance from the executive officer in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak related to a church service, ministry, or gathering.

In addition, all clergy, staff, and parishioners are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated to protect against COVID-19 and to stay current with any booster doses for which they are eligible.

For more information related to COVID-19, [please visit the Public Health Agency of Canada.](#)