

RESUMPTION OF INDOOR MASSES

It is with great rejoicing that I announce that beginning the weekend of June 13 – 14th, we will begin to celebrate Mass inside the Church again. We have been developing a plan for the best way to do this, being aware of the health and welfare of you and the clergy. The implementation of this plan reflects the directives of Bishop Caggiano and the State of Connecticut.

Since the pandemic has not disappeared, there will be certain limitations and restrictions to ensure everyone's health and safety.

1. There will be a limit of 46 people at each Mass who must pre-register - **NO** walk-ins will be admitted. Registration will be on a first-come basis, and you can only register on **WEDNESDAYS** from 9:00 am - Noon by calling the Parish Office at (203) 268-6217. Please make sure you speak to the secretary, and do not leave a message, to ensure that your registration is recorded in the order in which it is received.
2. Everyone **MUST** wear a facemask and social distancing of 6 feet must be observed. Do not sit in the areas marked off with blue tape. Immediate families can sit together in one pew, but will be counted as individuals in the total number permitted.
3. Entrance to the Church will be only through the back door near the elevator where people will be checked in. This will enable us to identify who is at each Mass in the event that follow-up contact testing is needed. Please arrive at least **5 minutes** before Mass begins since the door will be locked 5 minutes before Mass.
4. The elderly and most vulnerable should consider not attending for the time being. Those not feeling well or who have been in contact with someone with the virus or has symptoms associated with the virus, should remain quarantined and isolated at home.
5. Only the restroom on the lower level will be open for use.

6. The Church and restroom will be cleaned and sanitized after every Mass.
7. It is strongly encouraged that Holy Communion be received only in the hand. While liturgical law allows for the reception of Holy Communion on the tongue, this presents unique risks to both the priest/deacon and the recipient during the pandemic. Those who wish to receive on the tongue will be invited to receive after all others have received. If you choose not to receive, you may come up for a blessing.
8. We will continue to record and post our Sunday Masses on our Facebook Page “St Stephen RC Church” and Website for those unable to attend Mass.
9. I need 3 – 4 volunteers at each Mass. If there are no volunteers, some Masses may be cancelled.

With guidance from the Diocese, we will continually evaluate our parish plan and procedures so that we can worship safely.

Finally, I want to thank all of you for your continued support of St. Stephen over the past few months. Your financial support and prayers are deeply appreciated. It has been a long journey. I have missed all of you and look forward to welcoming you home again.

God Bless.

Fr. Chris

*St. Stephen Church is pleased to be able to offer public worship again. The parish is taking precautions per the CDC and Governor Lamont’s recommendations regarding public gatherings, as well as precautions we feel are prudent under the circumstances. We look forward to welcoming you and your family back to Mass, but please understand **there are risks** involved in attending a public worship in a pandemic despite all of the precautions taken by the parish and the diocese.*

We ask your cooperation with all of the directives that have been put in place for your safety and the safety of our clergy and your fellow worshippers.