



January 26, 2021

Guidelines for Eucharistic Visitations
during the time of COVID-19

Liturgy for Eucharistic Visitations during the time of COVID-19



Guidelines

Licensing and Training of Eucharistic Visitors (EVs)

In recognition of the vital and life-restoring role eucharistic visitations play in the life of our community, the Diocese of Virginia encourages the renewal of these visitations, with proper training and careful attention to safety. Eucharistic visitations can be safely conducted by non-family members in non-church settings with proper preparation and precautions. All eucharistic visitors must have current licensure (with their parishes) as well as training in Visitations During the Time of COVID-19. Contact your parish priest for information on these required trainings and Eucharistic Visitor licensure.

Vaccination and Testing of Eucharistic Visitors (EVs)

We strongly recommend that those who are making these visits refrain from doing so until they have been vaccinated against the virus. Keep in mind that immunity does not begin immediately after getting the shot. It takes a while to build, and the guidance on it is evolving.

No one must make a Eucharistic visit and no one must receive one. The health and safety of everyone involved is vital. If there are any questions about health or safety, the visit is best postponed until everyone feels comfortable.

Preparation of communion kits

Communion kits should be prepared using sanitized hands, gloves, and masks. Communion kits should be prepared using sanitized hands, gloves, and masks. Communion kits must be disposable and used only once. Paper or plastic containers are good options for containers. Please consider using environmentally conscious packaging.

Visitors must wash and sanitize their hands before handling the contents of the kits.

The following items should be included with each kit:

- Consecrated wafers (regular and gluten free)
- Small paper cups or napkins for individual wafers to be placed upon
- An Order of Service for communion during the time of COVID-19
- A recent parish bulletin to leave with the communicant (when one is available)
- A CDC checklist of symptoms of COVID-19.
- A small bottle of hand sanitizer
- 3 clean, disposable masks
- Medical-grade gloves (*optional*)

Note: wine is *not permitted* for distribution at this time.

Pre-visit Protocol

Visitors and all residence of the home being visited must have either tested negative for COVID-19, received medical clearance to end quarantine following a positive diagnosis, or have had no symptoms within 24-hours of the planned visit (a detailed checklist of possible symptoms is below). Visits should be rescheduled if any of those involved have come in contact with someone who has received a positive COVID-19 test within 2 weeks of the scheduled visit. Those who have had possible exposures should be tested for infection. ***If there is any question regarding wellness of any individuals involved, visits should be rescheduled for a later date.***

Individual visitors may be permitted to visit no more than two communicants, as long as the necessary precautions are taken, which are included below. All Eucharistic Visitors should call in advance of the visit to make the participant aware of how to prepare for the visit.

When making arrangements for a visit, Eucharistic Visitors should call ahead to communicants and review the visitation guidelines, including protocols around duration, masking, social distancing, and the CDC health screening checklist to make sure that everyone is clear of all symptoms.

Visits should not last longer than 15 minutes.

Setting

In order to minimize risk of viral transmission, outdoor settings should be chosen every time, weather and setting permitted. If visits are conducted indoors, Visitors should require a well-ventilated room which allow for a minimum of 6 feet of distance between every individual involved, at all times.

The number of people involved in a gathering should be limited to 3 or fewer (for spacing purposes).

Masks should be worn by all involved, at all times, except for the moment of consumption.

Handshakes, hugs, fist bumps, elbow taps and touching of any form is not permitted.

The Liturgy

The Diocese of Virginia has drafted a Service for Eucharistic Visitations during the Time of COVID-19 (see below). The Order of Service should be reviewed during the Eucharistic Visitor training and a copy included with each communion kit.

Administering Communion

Wafers may *not* be transferred directly in the hands of those receiving. In order to preserve the required 6-feet of distance at all times, the wafers should be arranged on a plate/purificator and then retrieved by the communicant after the visitor has properly distanced themselves. While wearing gloves is optional when the wafers are transferred to the plate/ purificator, sanitizing hands through handwashing or hand sanitizer is required.

Record Keeping

The parish should maintain a record of all visitations. If any involved were to become infected, the church can provide the local Health Department with the list for contact tracing purposes (note: it is unlikely outdoor visits lasting less than 15-minutes will be considered "contact", according to VDH guidelines).

The Center for Disease Control COVID-19 Symptom Checklist. Visits should be cancelled or rescheduled if anyone involved experiences one or more of the following symptoms within 2 days of the schedule visit:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Thank you for your ministry. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your parish clergy.

The Gospel of the Day

The following, or some other passage of Scripture appropriate to the occasion is read.

Mark 6: 7, 12-13

He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Psalm 23

¹The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;

³ he restores my soul.^[b]

He leads me in right paths^[c]
for his name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.

Brief reflections on the reading may be offered.

A Confession of Sin may be said

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. *Amen.*

Minister May Almighty God in mercy receive our confession of sorrow and of faith, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. *Amen.*

The Lord's Prayer

Administration of the Holy Communion

Wafers may not be transferred directly in the hands of those receiving. In order to preserve the required 6-feet of distance at all times, the wafers should be arranged on a disposable plate/napkin and then retrieved by the communicant after the visitor has properly distanced themselves (see above "Preparation of Communion Kits").

The bread is administered with the following words

The Body of Christ (the Bread of Heaven).

Closing Prayer

O gracious God, whose Christ stretched out arms of love upon the hard wood of the cross to embrace all the peoples of the earth: We give you thanks for feeding *N.* our *sister* with the Sacrament of that precious Body and Blood, which is the sign and instrument of our common life, and also for enriching our parish family by *her* sharing with us the food of our pilgrimage, the foretaste of that heavenly banquet of which we partake with all your saints; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. *Amen.*

Minister Let us bless the Lord.

Response Thanks be to God.

The minister concludes

May the Lord bless us and keep us.

May the Lord make his face to shine upon us.

May the Lord be gracious to us and give us peace. Amen.

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