



The Church of the Ascension

Rockville Centre, New York

September 2nd, 2020

Dear Ascension Family,

On Sunday, September 13th, we will begin having two masses in the church: Low Mass at 8am and High Mass at 10:30am. ***For the first few weeks of this arrangement, mass will be said, but communion will NOT be distributed to the congregation. We do, however, expect to begin distributing communion on October 4th, and when that happens we want everyone to be aware of how we are adapting our procedures to be as safe as possible.***

Moving forward, the following guidelines will be in effect for all masses at Ascension:

- Anyone that is running a fever, or that is feeling in any way ill, or that may have been exposed to Covid-19 is asked to stay home and worship online.
- Anyone that belongs to a high-risk group (elderly, underlying conditions, etc.) is encouraged to continue worshipping online.
- Attendance is strictly limited to 50 persons.
- Masks must be worn by everyone entering the building and must cover your nose and mouth. Masks must remain on throughout the service with the exception of lowering it to consume the communion host (see below). When appropriately distant, the priest and LEM may remove their masks to speak.
- Hands should be sanitized upon entry.
- The usher will mark your presence on a weekly contact tracing form. We must have contact information for everyone present in the event of someone being diagnosed with Covid-19.
- Bulletins are placed on the pews next to socially distanced blue dot markers. Please sit only where there is a blue dot. Households may sit together. DO NOT sit in pews marked "closed."
- Please refrain from making physical contact with others (no hand shaking, etc).
- The 10:30am High Mass will have music provided by the organist and choir section leaders. There will, unfortunately, be no congregational singing at this time. For everyone's health and safety right now, we ask that you allow the choir section leaders to sing on your behalf.
- The offering plate will not be passed. The offering plate will sit on a stand at the choir steps. You are encouraged to leave your offering in the plate either before or after the service, or when the distribution of communion starts you may leave it on your way to receive communion. Individuals worshipping from home are encouraged to continue sending their pledge to the office or making their pledge online.

When the distribution of communion begins:

- Ushers will direct the congregation to come up.



- Congregants coming forward for communion should form ONE, SINGLE-FILE LINE up the center aisle. Please remain 6 feet behind the person in front of you.
- When you come to the choir steps, if you have not already done so, you may leave your offering in the plate.
- At the top of the choir steps the LEM will be waiting with hand sanitizer to allow you to sanitize your hands immediately before receiving the host.
- Come to the center of the altar rail where the priest (who will be wearing a mask with sanitized hands) will be waiting.
- DO NOT KNEEL. Please extend your hands, palms upward in a cupped fashion. The priest will not administer to anyone on the tongue. You must extend your hands in a cupped fashion.
- Without making contact with your hands, the priest will drop a communion host into your cupped palms.
- Immediately step to the side and walk away. You may lower your mask momentarily to consume the host, but must replace it immediately. Please return to your seat.
- Unfortunately, the chalice and wine will not be distributed at this time.

Other changes to be aware of:

- The 10:30am High Mass will be live-streamed. This can be viewed on our website: www.ascensionrvc.org, or by going to our YouTube page. Please click “subscribe” on our YouTube page if you have not already done so.
- There will be no coffee hours.
- Sunday School will be taking place virtually this term and materials are being distributed this week. If you have not done so already, please speak with Lisa Chiara if you are interested in enrolling your child in our virtual Sunday School.
- Beginning in October, we will have a Zoom Coffee Hour the first Sunday of Every Month, and a Children’s Prayer Breakfast lesson on Zoom the second Sunday of every month.
- The Shop at Ascension remains closed at this time.

This has been such a trying and difficult time for all of us. I thank you all for your patience and faithfulness as we have had to adapt quickly to new and unknown circumstances. Obviously, the situation is still fluid and these guidelines are subject to change as circumstances warrant, but these are likely to be our procedures through the end of the year at least. While I will miss seeing the kids in Sunday School, and I will miss the full choir, I am very thankful that public masses are again being offered. I am also thankful that with our new live-streaming technology that we are able to share those masses with a wider audience.

*May the graciousness of the Lord our God be upon us;
Prosper the work of our hands;
Prosper our handiwork.
-Psalm 90:17*

Sincerely,

Fr. Kevin Morris