

E-mail to: Clergy, Wardens, Vestry/Bishop's Committee Members, Standing Committee, Diocesan Council & Diocesan Support Center

Date: February 5, 2022

Subject: Update to the "Customary in the Time of Pandemic"

Please find attached the latest **update** to the "**Customary in the Time of Pandemic.**" Many thanks to the members of the Worship Task Group for their thoughtful recommendations.

Given the evolving understanding of the medical community, several items have been adjusted in the customary, but here are some **highlights**:

- Books, etc. may return to the pews.
 - The original customary asked us to remove all Books of Common Prayer, Hymnals, and similar items from the pews, but as long as items are not being shared between people, they may return. As congregational singing is still not allowed, you may not want to return hymnals at this point in time.
- While masked and practicing social distancing, vocal congregational responses may be made in a quiet voice.
 - The previous customary urged congregants to read along/mouth words instead of speaking aloud.
- Processions are again allowed – either in silence or to music played or sung by individuals not themselves in the procession.
- Kneeling is allowed, provided appropriate social distancing is maintained.
- Celebrants are no longer asked to wear rubber gloves for baptism.

A full **Ash Wednesday** reflection has been sent out to the Diocese at large, but to be clear, my directive is to **not** directly impose ashes on the forehead (making a cross). I recommend just not having ashes at all this year. **If** ashes are offered, it may be done with the sprinkling of ashes over the faithful. For more detailed information (as well as my reasoning), please read the published reflection.

Guidance for **Holy Week and Easter** will be forthcoming, allowing time for new medical insights and state and county policies.

Finally, please take some time to read the following interview with Dr. Fauci, answering the burning question "When can we go back to church singing":

<https://www.businessinsider.com/when-can-we-go-back-to-church-singing-according-fauci-2021-1>

The short answer is **not yet**. However, this article gives not only caution but also hope, as Dr. Fauci indicated that he believes that "normal" Church experiences, including congregational singing – even hugging again in Church! – could potentially return by mid-to-late Fall.

Bob

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