



Diocese of Kamloops
BISHOP'S OFFICE

January 7, 2022

Dear Clergy, Religious and Faithful of the Diocese of Kamloops,

In writing this letter I wish to address the ongoing concerns that have been brought forward to me and to my office regarding those that do not wish to comply with my request, and that is **Masks Are Mandatory** and to be worn by all individuals 5 years + who intend and wish to attend inside worship services within the Diocese of Kamloops. The safety and well-being of all staff and parishioners are my priority, and therefore it is my responsibility as your Bishop, to follow and comply with the Provincial Health Officers (PHO) order for the duration of the pandemic, or until the PHO lifts this order.

Public Health Order on Masks for all Public Indoor Settings (Province-Wide):

- Masks are required in all public indoor settings for those 5 years + and this includes Places of Worship, including congregants and choirs as they come into the place of worship and when they leave, until outside. This order also includes all participants that are entering to attend all Events and Gatherings that are held within the places of worship.

Please Note: A church is categorized in the PHO Order as an Indoor Public Setting, therefore the PHO for Mandatory Masks Wearing also includes all activities that are planned to take place within the church, and that includes private prayer. The new orders requires that all operators of indoor public spaces (including faith communities) must post signage at the entrance to all indoor areas covered by this order notifying that face coverings are required to be worn in accordance with this order.

Mask Wear Exemptions particular to Worship Services include:

- Food or drink consumption as part of worship ceremony
- When an officiant is speaking, chanting, or singing during worship, with physical distancing or barriers
- If the face covering is removed temporarily to permit a participant to engage in a worship activity that cannot be performed while wearing a face covering, for example, while acting as a reader, singing a solo or actively playing a wind instrument, but not including while singing or chanting as a participant in a worship service or as part of a choir

Public Health Order for Northern Health Region (Quesnel & Valemount):

- Worship services are allowed with a 50% capacity limit. Everyone attending over the age of 11+ must be vaccinated.
- A Covid-19 Safety Plan is required.
- Virtual and “drive-in” services are permitted under the MHO (Medical Health Order). It is important to remember that persons attending a drive-in service remain in their car.
- Must follow the PHO Order on Mandatory Masks Wearing for all Public Indoor Settings which is a Province-wide order

As a result of this order of the PHO, the Diocese is implementing immediately the following options:

- For parishioners who wear a mask or face covering, your attendance in church worship is available; please physically distance in the appropriate manner, and wear your mask or face covering in the manner prescribed by the PHO – masks or face coverings must cover the mouth and nose of the person wearing the mask or face covering
- For parishioners who do not wear a mask or face covering, we have livestream Masses available for your attendance – once the livestream Mass has completed, you can come to the Church parking lot and communion will be given.

These are the only two options that will be offered at this time; the PHO is serious about compliance with its order, and thus we have no choice; in fact, we have chosen to comply with legitimate authority in order to **keep our churches open for the Mass**. While this is difficult for some, we ask for your compliance with this order, so that our churches remain open.

I am grateful to all our clergy, and you the parishioners for your patience and understanding. I ask for your continued support and efforts to provide a safe and healthy environment to all those entrusted to our care.

May the Immaculate Heart of Mary, St. Joseph, and St. John Vianney continue to guide and protect us during these challenging times.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



✠Joseph Phuong Nguyen
Bishop of Kamloops