

June 4, 2020

My dear parishioners:

**Subject: Reopening Plan for Mary Help of Christians Church Date of Reopening**

What an extraordinary and disturbing Spring we have been experiencing this year. We still contend with the ravages and uncertainty of Covid-19. In recent days, we have been witnessing the continuing legacy of racial divide in our country. Each day we witness suffering, pain, and brutal acts of hatred and even murder in the streets of our cities. These events have created great anxiety, fear, concern and a desire to bring about both peace and justice in our nation. Yet we are called to be more.

As Christians, we know that we are called to be a people of faith, of hope and, most importantly, of charity. ***We must be constant and vigilant in our prayer. We must not fall into an empty despair. We must respond in thought, word and deed in a manner, which Jesus Himself would approve.*** In so doing, we will transform the darkness of these days and awaken in us a true desire to be a beacon of Christ's light. For as St. Francis Assisi once prayed: "Make us a Channel of your Peace, and where there is hatred let us bring your love, and where there is injury pardon."

After several weeks of having been absent from our Church building, I am happy to announce that we have completed the necessary preliminary steps, so that it will be safe for us to **partially reopen our Church Building, beginning the weekend of June 13/14.**

**EXTREMELY IMPORTANT: IF WE ARE TO OPEN, WE WILL NEED VOLUNTEERS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18-64 TO SERVE ON ONE OF THE THREE COMMITTEES MENTIONED IN MY LAST LETTER. AS YOU MAY RECALL THE COMMITTEES INCLUDE: A SETUP TEAM, A GREETING TEAM, AND A CLEANING TEAM. THE VOLUNTEERS WILL BE REQUIRED AT EVERY MASS. PLEASE CONTACT THE RECTORY, IF YOU ARE WILLING TO SERVE. YOU WILL BE PROVIDED WITH NECESSARY MATERIALS AND DIRECTIONS.**

**PLEASE NOTE WITHOUT THESE VOLUNTEERS WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CELEBRATE MASS.**

Following the prescribed health regulations; our opening will be restricted in several ways. It will take a little longer for us to be, completely, open as we were before the pandemic. This is, for us, an important first step. Enclosed in this mailing, you will find a trifold pamphlet entitled *TIPS FOR ALL WORSHIPERS*. It is important to study and to follow the directives in this pamphlet not just for ourselves, but for the health and safety of others. Please read, carefully, what you will be asked to do, if you plan on attending Mass. The pamphlet, clearly, explains the four stages required for our attendance. The pamphlet includes step by step instructions on what is expected of us: **1. BEFORE YOU ARRIVE; 2. WHEN YOU ARRIVE; 3. DURING THE SERVICE; 4. AFTER THE SERVICE.**

It is clear, that we will not be able to return to Mass, as we have done in the past. I offer for your perusal some additional supporting information for your consideration:

- The **Mass schedule** will be Saturdays at 5:00 P.M.; Sundays at 9:00 A.M.; and Wednesdays at 6:00 P.M. to begin. Additional Masses will be added if needed.
- It is essential that we **be patient** and not become upset with these temporary inconveniences.



- The **dispensation** from the Sunday Obligation to attend Mass still continues.
- Those over **65 should consider not attending** Mass, particularly, those who are vulnerable.
- Those who have **weakened immune systems** and are vulnerable should not attend.
- Those who **do not yet feel safe in attending** (no matter their age) are dispensed.
- Do not expect to **sit where you did** in the past.
- The **Greeters will seat** you and assist with all movement in the Church.
- Do **not remove signs** or barriers in the pews.
- The **Organ Loft will be closed** for disinfecting purposes.
- The only doors that you can enter and exit are through **the Central Main Doors**.
- The **handicapped entrance is limited** only to those who are handicapped.
- The number **attending each Mass is limited to 50 people**.
- **Families living in the same household** are permitted to sit next to one another.

### **CONFIRMATION, GRADUATION and FIRST COMMUNION**

Beginning on July 4, it will be necessary to offer the Sacrament of Confirmation for our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students. All pastors have been delegated by the Bishop to confirm their students. We will begin with St. Mary's 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. **Plans are now being made to both confirm and graduate our 8<sup>th</sup> Graders on Saturday, July 4.** During the following weeks, the remaining students will be confirmed in small numbers (dates and times to be determined.) In consultation with our Principal, C.R.E., P.S.R. Coordinator, we are considering the same format for those who are to receive their First Communion. **The parents will receive specific communications regarding the liturgies from the School and P.S.R. Program.**

### **CHOICE OF MASS ATTENDANCE:**

Because of limiting seating to 50 at our Masses, I ask that everyone, please, be open (if at all possible) to **consider attending Mass on a day other than on a weekend.** Until we receive exact numbers of those wishing to attend; employment limitations; numbers wishing to attend in residence families; and the number of volunteers required to support the health regulations; we will attempt to be as supportive as possible. This is new and complex for all of us and **will require a period of adjustment.**

### **ARRANGEMENTS TO ATTEND:**

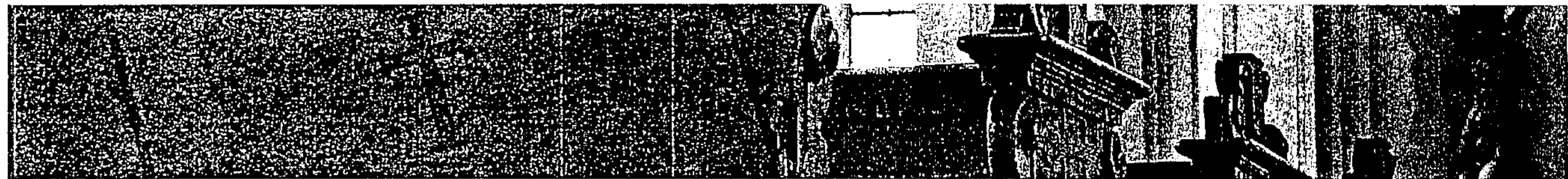
If you wish **to attend Mass, please contact the Rectory.** I ask that you provide us with your name; the number in the family group with whom you are living; choice of Mass time, remembering the limitations of space. It is our hope that as many as possible will be able to attend during the week. Since we are dealing with number limitations **Masses will be filled on a first come, first served basis. PLEASE CALL RECTORY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO RESERVE SEATING.**

Wishing you God's blessings and asking for your patience and understanding, I remain.

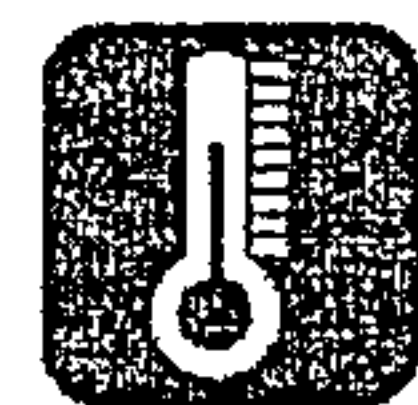
Sincerely in Christ,



The Very Reverend Eugene H. Wojcik, V.F.  
Pastor



# BEFORE YOU ARRIVE



CHECK YOUR TEMPERATURE: IF YOU HAVE ONE, PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CHURCH



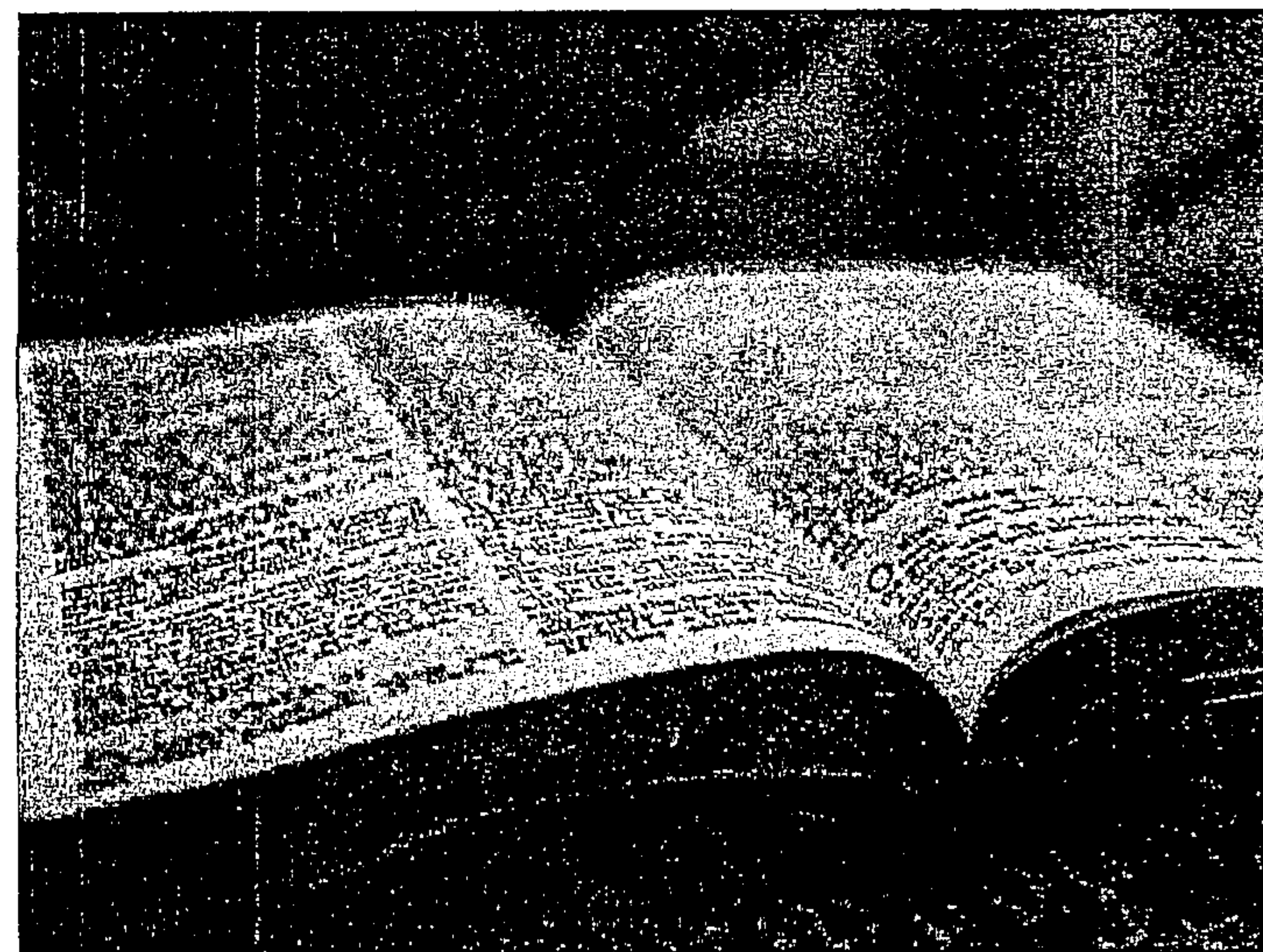
STAY HOME IF YOU ARE ILL



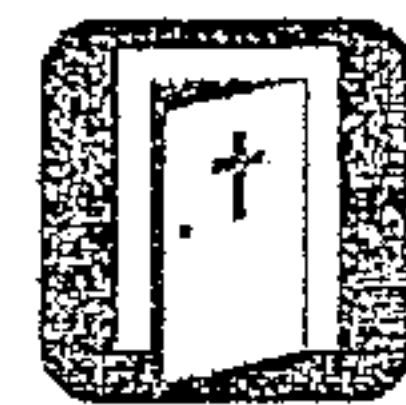
MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A FACE COVERING TO BRING AND WEAR



REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR REGISTRATION OR BE ON A LIST OF ATTENDEES



# WHEN YOU ARRIVE



ENTER ONLY IN MARKED DOORWAYS.



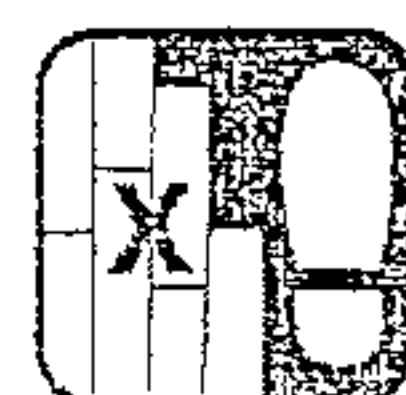
WAIT PATIENTLY TO BE CHECKED IN BY GREETER



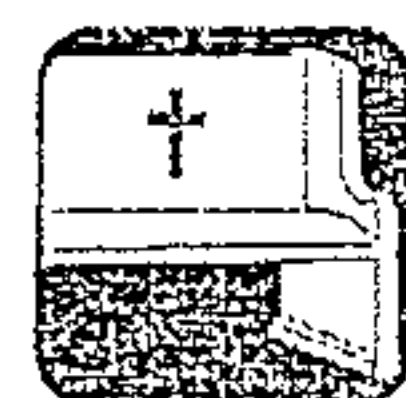
KEEP YOUR FACE COVERING OR MASK ON AT ALL TIMES EXCEPT FOR RECEIVING COMMUNION



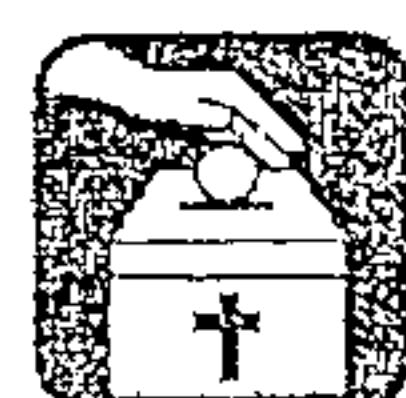
SANITIZE YOUR HANDS AS DIRECTED BY GREETER



OBSERVE SOCIAL DISTANCING AT ALL TIMES (LOOK FOR MARKS ON THE FLOOR)



USHERS WILL DIRECT YOU TO PEWS WITH MARKINGS ON WHERE TO SIT



SINCE THERE WILL BE NO PASSING OF BASKETS FOR YOUR OFFERING PLEASE LEAVE YOUR OFFERING IN THE BOXES PROVIDED AT THE ENTRANCE AND EXIT AREAS

# DURING THE SERVICE



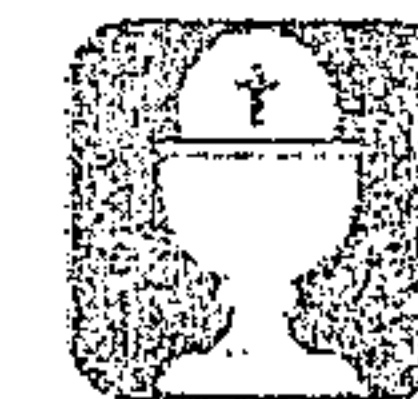
DO NOT CHANGE SEATS DURING A SERVICE



THERE WILL BE NO PASSING OF OFFERING BASKETS.



NO PHYSICAL SIGN OF PEACE WILL BE EXCHANGED DURING MASS



FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMMUNION:

- LEAVE YOUR SEAT ONLY WHEN DIRECTED BY USHER OR GREETER
- MAINTAIN 6 FEET SOCIAL DISTANCING IN THE COMMUNION LINE—LOOK FOR MARKS ON FLOOR
- WHEN 12 FEET OR 2 PEOPLE AWAY FROM THE PRIEST SANITIZE YOUR HANDS USING THE SANITIZER FROM THE USHER. AFTER SANITIZING DO NOT TOUCH ANY SURFACES.
- APPROACH THE PRIEST ONLY AFTER YOU ARE CALLED FORWARD. DO NOT REMOVE YOUR FACE COVERING.
- EXTEND A SINGLE HAND TO RECEIVE THE HOST.
- AFTER MOVING 6 FEET TO THE RIGHT OR LEFT, REMOVE YOUR MASK AND CONSUME THE HOST
- REPLACE YOUR FACE COVERING OR MASK
- FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS TO RETURN TO YOUR PEW

# AFTER THE SERVICE



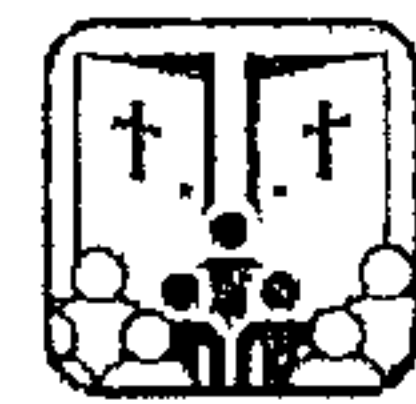
PLEASE TAKE ANY WORSHIP AIDS YOU MAY HAVE BROUGHT WITH YOU.



YOU WILL BE DISMISSED BY PEW OR SEATING AREA. FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE GREETER OR USHER.



USE ONLY THE DESIGNATED EXIT DOORS.



DO NOT CONGREGATE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH DOORS.



CONTINUE TO WEAR YOUR FACE COVERING OR MASK UNTIL YOU LEAVE THE AREA WHERE WORSHIPERS ARE.



WHILE OUR PARISH STAFFS WILL ATTEMPT TO TAKE APPROPRIATE PRECAUTIONS CONSISTENT WITH THE ADVICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITIES, PARISHIONERS AND GUESTS SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THEY ASSUME THE RISK OF CONTRACTING COVID-19 ANYTIME THEY ENTER A PUBLIC SPACE SINCE SUCH PRECAUTIONS DO NOT ELIMINATE THE RISK OF INFECTION

## TIPS FOR ALL WORSHIPERS

WHAT TO EXPECT