



From the Bishop

The Right Reverend Cathleen Chittenden Bascom
Tenth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas

August 4, 2021

Dearly Beloved of the Diocese of Kansas:

At every stage in this COVID pandemic, we have sought in our diocese to follow the best medical and scientific guidance available and to empower parishes to follow that guidance in light of their local context. Above all, we have been guided by Jesus' summary of the law: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and love your neighbor as yourself.* In facing the complexities and changing nature of this virus, sacrificial love of our neighbors and of our selves can be difficult, frustrating, and even costly, but it is our calling.

Out of this call to love, considering the current spike in COVID-19 cases across Kansas, and after consultation with medical advisers, the Executive Committee of the Council of Trustees, and the Council of Deans, I am requiring that all people over two years of age – vaccinated and unvaccinated alike – **wear masks for all indoor worship and gatherings in Episcopal churches in the Diocese of Kansas beginning no later than Sunday, August 15, and continuing through October 1, 2021.** At that time the mask policy will be reviewed, in consideration of COVID-19 cases and vaccination rates. Decisions about daily mask use in church offices is at the discretion of local leadership.

The move to universal masking is currently the only diocesan policy change. All [previous diocesan guidance](#) stands. Clergy may look for new recommendations regarding communion and safe approaches to fellowship and food from our office soon.

Love of others: Many Episcopalians in our diocese are vaccinated, and even with the Delta variant infections happen in only a small proportion of people who are fully vaccinated. However, while we may know the vaccination status of our members, we also need to be welcoming to potential visitors. Additionally, evidence suggests that the delta variant can be transmitted by those who are vaccinated just as easily as by those who are un-vaccinated. This is of special importance in respect to those with health conditions that prevent them from being vaccinated and as the school year approaches to children who are not yet eligible to be vaccinated.

Love of self: Lastly, I ask you to do everything in your power, with creativity and respect, to educate people and increase the number of vaccinated people in your congregation and community as an act of self-love, honoring the image of God in each person.

When the pandemic first hit, I wrote that we would need to be agile, willing to come in and out of public and virtual spaces. I cannot express my deep esteem for how clergy and lay leaders alike have done this with grace. I give great thanks to God that many lives in our diocese have been protected because of such leadership.

Every Blessing,

The Right Reverend Cathleen Bascom
10th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas