

# St. Michael the Archangel Parish

301 SPRUCE STREET  
HOLLIDAYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 16648

May 26, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are beginning to open up some aspects of our public liturgical life. I would like to share with you a plan for how we can do this at our parish.

Let me begin, though, with a word of thanks. I'm so grateful to all of you for your patience, prayers, and support throughout this ordeal.

I should also sound a note of caution. As I understand things, we are by no means past the COVID pandemic. Coming to the church or any public location involves risk, and you need to be aware of that. It's not possible for us to eliminate every way of contracting the coronavirus while at church. So, you need to decide about this based on a well-formed conscience. Please remember that the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation remains suspended.

## Private Prayer

As you probably know, our church is now open for public prayer. We're following basically the same hours that were in place before the closings. So, St. Mary's is open from approximately 6:00am to 6:00pm. St. Michael's is open from approximately 7:00am to 7:00pm.

## Confessions and Adoration

We have also resumed the regular schedule for confessions. Confessions will be celebrated on Saturday at 3:00pm at St. Mary's and on the Thursday before the First Friday at 4:00pm. Confessions at St. Michael's are at 1:00pm on Saturday and 7:30am on Sunday. Because of health concerns, we've arranged to celebrate the sacrament outside at both parishes. Eucharistic adoration will resume at St. Mary's on First Fridays.

## Masses

We're under some new limitations regarding how people can gather for liturgies at our church. When or if these limits will be removed is unclear. One limitation is that there has to be six feet in all directions around people who are not from the same household. This means that we will have to block off pews and kindly request that people sit where directed. Obviously, this reduces the number of people we can have in the church at any one time. We're also under a requirement to sanitize our hands frequently. So, when you enter or leave the church, please use a little hand sanitizer. Finally, we're asking that everyone wear a face covering unless they have a medical condition that would prevent that. It's possible, therefore, that not everyone who comes to church will be wearing a mask.

## Private Daily Masses with Holy Communion Outside of Mass

In keeping with diocesan directives, on Monday, June 1, I would like to begin having daily Masses at the regular times and places. However, *these Masses will remain private*. They won't be open to the general public. Instead, I encourage you either to watch Mass on TV or the internet, or at least to read the readings of the day for yourselves. At the end of each Mass, I will come to the door of the church to distribute Holy Communion to anyone who is waiting outside the church. While you are waiting, please try to observe the six-foot rule, wash your hands, and wear a mask. I'm arranging for Holy Communion to be offered two times each weekday. It will be available Monday through Friday at approximately 8:15am at St. Michael's and at 7:00pm at St. Mary's.

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### Private Weekend Masses with Holy Communion Outside of Mass

On the weekend of June 6 and 7, Fr. Alfred and I will begin having private weekend Masses at the regular times. Again, these Masses will be *private*. I encourage you to watch Mass at home or at least to read the Sunday readings. At the end of these Masses, we will distribute Holy Communion to all who come to the church doors. You're under no obligation to come for Communion, so please be reasonable in protecting your own health and the health of others. If you do come for Holy Communion, observe the six-foot rule, wash your hands, and wear a mask. Because you'll need to remove your mask to receive Holy Communion, be sure to wash your hands *after* you have received and adjusted your mask. Holy Communion will be distributed at St. Mary's on Saturday at 5:00pm, and on Sunday at 9:00am and 11:00am. Holy Communion will be distributed at St. Michael's on Saturday at 6:00pm and on Sunday at 9:30am, 11:00am, and 12:30pm.

### Public Masses

Beginning on Saturday, June 13, all Masses will once again be public. They will be celebrated at the normal times and in the normal locations. We will have to observe the six-foot rule, hand sanitizing, and wearing of nose and mouth coverings. If we run out of space for people in the church itself, we'll have a second location for folks where people can watch a Mass and receive Holy Communion. For those uncomfortable with coming into the enclosed space of the church, we'll continue to distribute Holy Communion after each Mass for the time being. The times are listed above.

We will use a modified procedure for distributing Holy Communion. This will help us observe the six-foot rule and avoid inadvertent contact. We will also change the way we exit from Mass. I would like all those who are physically able to use the front entrance of the church, keeping a distance from others who are exiting. The side entrance will be reserved for the physically challenged. When they have exited, we will distribute Holy Communion at the side door of the church. Please use care in the parking lot since we will likely have people walking to and from the side door for Holy Communion.

### Volunteers

For this reopening to work, I need the help of many volunteers. First, we're going to need multiple ministers of hospitality at all weekend Masses. They will seat people in compliance with the six-foot rule and keep people spaced apart during Holy Communion. They'll also distribute bulletins at the end of Mass. If you had previously been an usher, and you're willing to take the risk of coming to weekend Masses, then we could really use your help. I'd like to have two training sessions for ministers of hospitality. The first will be on Saturday, June 6, at 10:00am at St. Mary's Church. The second will be Saturday, June 13, at 10:00am at St. Michael's Church. Because the procedures will be similar at both parishes, you can come to either training session.

Also, we're going to need volunteers to help clean the church between Masses. Pews will need to be sprayed and wiped down, door handles cleaned and so on. Please contact the parish office if you would be willing to perform this work of charity. Be sure to let the parish staff know which Mass you will be attending.

Finally, we're going to need sufficient extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. We'll need help at Mass itself. Communion will be under the form of bread only, but it's helpful to have a second minister at Mass. It will also be helpful if ministers of Holy Communion can be available to help distribute Communion after Mass. More importantly, though, we're going to need people who are willing to take Holy Communion to the sick, the fearful, the homebound, and anyone who is unable to come to the church. If you have family members in these conditions, perhaps you'd be willing to volunteer. I'll have training sessions for all who choose to continue as ministers of Holy Communion as well as those who would like to take on this ministry. These sessions will be on Saturday, June 6, at 11:00am at St. Mary's Church, and Saturday, June 13, at 11:00am at St. Michael's Church. Again, because of similar procedures, you can attend either session. If you'd like to participate in this important work but these times don't work for you, give a call and I'll arrange a private training session.

If you are confused by all of this, welcome to the club! There is a chart on the reverse side that should help make things a little clearer. If you have questions, please give the parish office a call. St. Mary's office can be reached at 695-0622 and St. Michael's office can be reached at 695-0912.

My thanks again to everyone who's tried so hard to remain faithful to Christ and his Church during this difficult time. The weeks and months ahead will probably involve many changes and considerable turmoil, so I ask for your ongoing patience.

Be sure that I've been remembering you each day at Mass.

Yours in Christ,

*Fr. Alan*

P.S. Thanks again for your prayers and kindness. Thanks, too, for continuing your financial support of our parish.

# CHURCH SCHEDULE

*At St. Mary Church*

*At St. Michael Church*

## Private Prayer

**6:00 AM – 6:00 PM** every day

**7:00 AM – 7:00 PM** every day

**7:00 AM – 3:00 PM** (on June 6th only)

## Confession

**3:00 PM** every Saturday

**4:00 PM** every Thursday before the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month

**1:00 PM** every Saturday

**7:30 AM** every Sunday

## Adoration

**8 AM – 6:30 PM** every First Friday of the month

## Communion Only *(starting June 1st) continuing once public Mass starts*

**7:00 PM** every weekday (M-F)

**5:00 PM** every Saturday

**9:00 AM** every Sunday

**11:00 AM** every Sunday

**8:15 AM** every weekday (M-F)

**6:00 PM** every Saturday

**9:30 AM** every Sunday

**11:00 AM** every Sunday

**12:30 PM** every Sunday

## Public Mass & after Mass distribution of Communion

*beginning June 13*

**Mass 4:00 PM** every Saturday

**Communion distribution at 5:00 PM** every Saturday

**Mass 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM** every Sunday

**Communion distribution at:**

**9:00 & 11:00 AM** every Sunday

**Mass 6:00 PM** every Wednesday

**Communion distribution at 7:00 PM** Monday - Friday

**Mass 5:00 PM** every Saturday

**Communion distribution at 6:00 PM** every Saturday

**Mass 8:30 AM, 10:00 AM & 11:30 AM** every Sunday

**Communion distribution at:**

**9:30 AM, 11:00 AM & 12:30 PM** every Sunday

**Mass 7:45 AM** every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday

**Communion distribution at 8:15 AM** Monday - Friday