

## DIOCESE OF KOOTENAY

**This Item: Policy 2.20 (Mar 2022)**

**Replaces: Policy 2.20 (Feb 2022)**

**Status: Policy**

**Distribution: All Parishes/Congregations**

**Subject: Worship in Times of Covid**

**March 15, 2022**

### **Kootenay Diocesan policy for in-person worship, other gatherings and rentals.**

This policy has been updated to reflect the latest Public Health Orders (PHO) dated March 10, 2022 on Events and Gatherings. The links to these orders and other helpful documents are listed below.

- **March 10, 2022 Events and Gatherings Order**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-gatherings-events.pdf>

- **WorkSafe BC's Communicable Disease Prevention Plan Template**

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/books-guides/communicable-disease-prevention-guide-employers?lang=en>

- **Printable COVID-19 Signage and Posters**

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/signage-posters>

- **Proof of vaccination information for businesses**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/proof/businesses#app>

### **Application of the Public Health Order**

The PHO requires adult attendees at any Event or Gathering, particularly events with children, to be vaccinated, and requires organizers to scan QR codes for entry. Some exceptions apply: please read the Order itself for the details.

**Worship services are excluded from the Events and Gatherings Order.** For clarity between worship and non-worship gatherings assume that if the primary purpose of the gathering is

prayer and praise, then it's worship. If prayer and praise are incidental to the gathering, then it's non-worship and falls under the definition of "event" of the PHO. Funeral and wedding services in the church are worship but the receptions are not. Social and coffee hours following a service are non-worship. Although the PHO gives no specific directions for food service, the general Food Safe requirements remain in place. Educational and informational events such as Bible studies are non-worship.

**Gatherings in private residences are excluded from the Events and Gatherings Order.** This includes social gatherings, meetings, bible studies and other non-worship gatherings as listed above.

### **In-Person Worship**

The decision to conduct in-person worship, and the further decision to celebrate the Eucharist, must be supported by both the Incumbent Priest and the Church Council. No congregation is required to conduct in-person worship, or the Eucharist, but any who do must follow the guidelines below.

Parishes may, at their discretion, implement a COVID-19 safety protocol for worship, which may require attendees to be vaccinated, masked, physically distanced, or other measures such as ventilation in addition to this policy and the PHO.

**Any offering of Eucharist will be for the congregation to receive bread only in the form of individual wafers served in a sanitary manner. The priest will also consecrate a small amount of wine but will either consume it themselves, or it will be consumed by one designated parishioner. There will be no sharing of the cup. The prayer of consecration needs to be done in a way that preserves the sanitary nature of the host.**

The parish may require COVID-19 safety protocols for the Eucharist in addition to those named above.

### **Addendum to Diocesan Rental Policy 5.2.7**

In consideration of the ongoing pandemic the following is an addendum to the existing diocesan rental policy (5.2.7) (<https://www.kootenayanglican.ca/pages/canons-policies>) and is effective as of July 15th, 2021 and until further notice.

Please note that this addendum and our diocesan rental policy is permissive not prescriptive. Parishes may feel the need to add requirements in their context. Any additional requirements added by a parish must be enforced by the parish because we are liable for unenforced regulations.

Rental groups are at all times responsible for the activity and behaviour of group members or attendees at the events or meetings hosted by the rental group. Further, rental groups

are obligated to ensure that requirements of the current Public Health Order on Events and Gatherings are met. They are linked at the beginning of this document.

Rentals to groups for the purpose of worship are subject to the Diocesan policy on in-person worship. Parishes, at their option, may also require such groups to conform to all or part of the parish's COVID-19 safety protocol for worship.