



# The Call

The Newsletter  
of  
St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

**St. Andrew's Episcopal Church**  
Centered in God, Focused on Others  
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The Reverend Kevin Holland Sparrow, Rector  
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Courtney Hill, Sunday School Director

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## A Message from Bishop Harris about COVID-19 Protocols

Aug. 16, 2021

Dear People of the Diocese of Massachusetts,

Scientific and medical researchers and providers have determined that the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus now has outpaced the other forms of the disease infecting the United States and countries across the globe. The Delta variant is more easily transmitted than previous strains and more dangerous, resulting in more hospitalizations. "Breakthrough" infections in some vaccinated persons have proven that vaccinated individuals can spread the virus among others with whom they come into contact. Here in Massachusetts, as you know, areas on Cape Cod, such as Provincetown, and on the islands, including Nantucket, became COVID "red zones" following the July 4th holiday. There are continuing reports of family and community gatherings being "spreader events," causing extreme illness and death. Again hospitals and health care providers in various parts of the country are overwhelmed by the growing infection rate, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is recommending that persons with compromised immune systems obtain a booster vaccination. Vaccination lessens the opportunity for infection, and if infection of the Delta strain does occur, it lessens the severity of the disease.

There was much hope at the beginning of the summer that gathering for worship, ministry and community events inside our churches, homes and other facilities would become a freer possibility, as the number of people who have been vaccinated increased. Unfortunately, the adaptability and virulence of this disease continues to require our utmost vigilance to protect the most vulnerable.

In consultation with Bishop Alan Gates (who is on sabbatical) and Canon to the Ordinary Bill Parnell, I am now issuing an updated COVID protocol of requirements and recommendations for the Diocese of Massachusetts, which is below.

Please review these requirements and recommendations pertaining to all worship, ministry and gatherings in your community and use the links provided for further information.

This protocol goes into effect on Wednesday, Aug. 25, 2021, and continues until further notice. We will continue to monitor research and medical information, and provide updates as the situation and data warrant.

Canon Parnell will host a series of Zoom meetings to answer questions and offer

clarification. The schedule and Zoom links have been e-mailed to congregational leadership.

COVID-19 and other infectious diseases do not recognize gender, sexuality, demographics or zip codes. Diseases know neither political affiliation nor religious sensibilities. Over and over again in the Gospels, Jesus calls us to care for one another, and St. Paul reminds us to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2). Therefore, to wear masks is not a political statement or an impingement on freedom. To wear masks is to take precaution to not infect another. It is a Christian moral action, seeking to not be a source of infection and therefore to not bring a burden to another.

Yours in Christ Jesus,  
+Gayle  
The Rt. Rev. Gayle E. Harris

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## **Requirements and Recommendations for Churches**

- **NOW REQUIRED:** Maintain physical distancing (6 ft. or more) between households at all indoor gatherings.
- **NOW REQUIRED:** Mask wearing by everyone (except children age 2 and under) at all indoor gatherings.
- **NOW REQUIRED:** COVID vaccination of all persons, clergy or lay, who are engaged in ministry with the most vulnerable, including children age 12 and under, homebound or immune-compromised persons, and those in hospitals and care facilities.
- **EXPECTED:** Monitor guidance from the CDC, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and civic authorities in your own communities, and adjust your practices accordingly. The CDC provides a COVID Data Tracker at the county level which includes five critical factors to assess risk in your community and inform local decision making.
- **VIGILANCE TO PROTECT THE MOST VULNERABLE:** For some, including our youngest members, the vaccine is not yet available; for others, underlying medical conditions or history make vaccination inadvisable or less effective. Still others, even if fully vaccinated, are at higher risk for serious illness should they contract COVID-19.
- We strongly urge vaccination against the coronavirus for all our members as soon as they are eligible. We reiterate, however, that our congregations must not require vaccination, nor documentation thereof, for attendance at worship services.
- We urge you to be in regular conversation with renters and community groups who meet in your buildings to determine appropriate safety precautions.
- Pastoral visits are to be brief. Minimal physical proximity is safer, especially for those who are most vulnerable due to illness or age.
- Restrictions on the sharing of Holy Communion continue. Please use wafers for the distribution of Communion in one kind only. Refrain from using the common cup; individually pre-packaged wine may be used, if desired.
- We strongly urge regular cleaning of high-touch areas, ready availability of hand sanitizer and minimizing use of shared objects. Prayer books and hymnals are to be removed (photocopied worship leaflets or projected materials are preferable). An offering basin at a convenient location is preferable to passing offering plates.
- Singing and choral music is permitted, provided the mask requirement, stated

above, for indoor worship is observed.

- Coffee hour and other events with food and drinks may take place but plan carefully how food and drinks are served. Individually wrapped foods and designated servers, as opposed to potlucks or buffets, are a safer option. Physical distancing between households at such gatherings is strongly recommended.
- We urge careful planning with regard to Christian formation classes and events, especially where they involve young children not yet eligible for vaccination. You may wish to consult with your local schools or daycare providers about the practices they are observing.
- Nurseries and childcare are allowed, provided the health and safety guidance established by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care is observed.

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**Community Garden:** The Community Garden is doing well thanks to our dedicated volunteers! ***We still have openings for the upcoming weeks so please sign up if you are available to help with this important community project.*** We should be starting to harvest soon. Please keep in mind that the Hanover Food Pantry is open on Wednesdays from 12:30 PM until 2:30 PM. Ideally the produce should be harvested and delivered to the pantry on Wednesday around 11:45 AM so that it is all set before the doors open to their patrons. The Pantry phone # 781-826-6485, Sally Boutin is the pantry's President.

**Diomass newsletter signup:** Click the image to sign up for the Diomass newsletter!



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## Hybrid Worship Service Sunday, August 22, 2021 @ 9:00 am

Please note the following update worship guidelines:

- **Masks** must be worn by everyone on church property and during services.
- **Maintain physical distance** (6 ft. or more) between households at all indoor gatherings.
- Hand sanitizer is available at the entrance to the church, and for use before and after Holy Communion.



For those participating in the service from home, please join us on our Facebook link:

[www.facebook.com/standrewshanover](http://www.facebook.com/standrewshanover)

We want to thank you for your patience during this time. As always, the safety and health of our members is paramount.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [clergy@standrewshanover.org](mailto:clergy@standrewshanover.org) or speak with a member of the Vestry.

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**PRAYER LIST** - Please remember to keep these people in your prayers:

Carroll & Sue, Claire & Don, Tracey, Nancy, Bev, Beth, Steven, Susan, Hawk & Matthew, Karen, Erin Kate, Leah, Sophia, James & Judith, Lula Mae, AJ, Florence, Jamie, Janet M., Gayle, Tim, Boppy, Delores, Ben, the Brennan Family, Sarah, Julie, Jackson, Eileen & Larry, Gerry, Michele, Ken & Barbie, Meredith, Susan, Joan, Nancy, Bob, Janet G., Jackie, Celia, Kevin F., Priscilla, Bonnie, Robert, Katrina, Daron, Kurt, Ryan, Mel & family, Alden, Jane, Thomas P Sr., and Bruce M., Suzanne

If you would like someone added to the Prayer List, please contact the office by email or phone by Wednesday noon. Thank you.