



THE DIOCESE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Dear faithful people of the Diocese of South Carolina,

As we begin the third year of life in a pandemic, we continue to face challenges in safely gathering together. While I am tremendously supportive of growing the youth programs in our diocese, as your bishop, my top priority is being mindful of the health and safety of youth, adult leaders, and all involved in youth events. In making decisions as to how to best gather for in-person events, I consider the guidance of the national church, as well as the diocese's own medical advisors here on a local level, and their direction is clear. The safest way to move forward with in-person gatherings is to ask that all participants be fully vaccinated, wear masks as appropriate, and be diligent in hand washing. As Christians, God calls us to protect all in our care, particularly those who might be most vulnerable to risks associated with COVID-19. All protocols are created with this as the focus.

With this in mind, I, along with the Standing Committee, and in coordination with the leadership of the Children and Youth Commission, have developed the following COVID-19 protocols for all diocesan youth events.

For the foreseeable future, all youth and adult attendees:

- Must provide proof of full vaccination (two or more weeks past the final shot of their vaccination series). Medically-ineligible attendees must provide proof of ineligibility and test negative for COVID-19 within 48 hours of the retreat. A participant, chaperone, volunteer or staff person may be exempted from this vaccination requirement only by presenting a certificate from a licensed physician to the event staff stating that, due to the physical condition of the individual, one or more specified immunizations would endanger the individual's life or health. Claims of religious or philosophical exemption from vaccination shall not be recognized. These documents must be provided prior to the event via email.
 - Recognizing our goal of full adherence to this policy may be challenging to meet by our first quarter 2022 events, for events in January and February 2022, one shot of the vaccine will be satisfactory with demonstrated intention to be fully vaccinated by March 2022. Any additional exceptions to this policy will be at the discretion of the Bishop in consultation with the Standing Committee President. Attendees who are less than fully vaccinated (two or more weeks past the final shot of their vaccination series) must test negative for COVID-19 within 48 hours of the event.
 - Booster shots will be required starting in September 2022 to be considered fully vaccinated.
- Will wear a facial mask properly while indoors (except for mealtimes and while sleeping).
- Wash and/or sanitize hands regularly and thoroughly, and not only at mealtimes.
- Disclose confirmed COVID exposure within 14 days of the event of themselves or others in their household or regular circle of interactions to the diocesan liaison and event leadership. The attendee will be allowed to participate in all activities as long as they remain asymptomatic.
- Submit to health screenings and temperature checks as needed.

Faithfully yours,

The Rt. Rev. Ruth Woodliff-Stanley
Bishop of the Diocese of South Carolina