

St. Alban's Episcopal Church COVID-19 Indoor Protocols
Approved by the Vestry on March 14, 2022

Considering recent guidance from the Center for Disease Control, and their provision of streamlined tools for measuring community levels of COVID-19, the clergy and vestry of St. Alban's are implementing the following protocols for indoor gatherings, effective March 15, 2022. These protocols are in line with current guidelines from the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. Throughout the pandemic, we have sought to listen to public health experts and make decisions grounded in compassion for one another. We believe this policy will serve us well going forward.

SUMMARY:

When Mecklenburg County is in a period of LOW levels of COVID-19 ([green](#) on the [CDC map](#)), masks are *optional* for adults and children who are fully vaccinated. Masks are *required* for adults who are not fully vaccinated, per the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina. For children age 2 and older who are not fully vaccinated, masks are *recommended*. "Fully vaccinated" is defined as having received the full number of doses for which one is currently eligible.

When Mecklenburg County is in a period of MEDIUM levels of COVID-19 ([yellow](#) on the [CDC map](#)), masks are *required while singing* and *recommended at other times*, for all persons age 2 and older, regardless of vaccination status.

When Mecklenburg County is in a period of HIGH levels of COVID-19 ([orange](#) on the [CDC map](#)), masks are *required* for all persons age 2 and older, regardless of vaccination status.

At all times, anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 10 days, or currently has COVID-19 symptoms, is asked to join us for online worship and avoid in-person gatherings.

EXPLANATION:

These protocols apply for all church ministries as well as for outside groups who use our building. One caveat is that we continue to ask Children's Ministry volunteers and staff to wear masks during Sunday School and other indoor activities until there is a widely available vaccine for young children. Please note that our Preschool's protocols are set by the Preschool Board in consultation with the Diocesan Task Force for Schools, so at times their practices may differ from the practices of the Church.

While many among us have waited eagerly for masks to be optional, others among us feel apprehensive about this change. We are encouraged by recent data that shows N-95 (and comparable) masks provide significant protection for the wearer. We have procured a large quantity of N-95 masks and will make them available for anyone who wants one. We expect that some fully vaccinated people will continue to mask for their own protection or for the protection of those in their household. We will honor and respect each person's decision.

Additionally, we no longer ask those who enter the building to sign in for contact tracing. However, anyone who enters the building and subsequently tests positive for COVID-19 within 48 hours is asked to let the parish office know confidentially: parishadmin@saintalbansdavidson.org. If we learn that 2 or more households have tested positive after being at church at the same time, we will share that information (without disclosing identities) via parish-wide email.

While no in-person gathering can be entirely risk-free, we believe that we can safely gather using the above protocols. We are in a very different place now than we have been at other times in the last two years. The virus is not gone, but we now have so many more tools at our disposal, including access to vaccines that are highly effective against hospitalization, and readily available medical-grade masks to protect the most vulnerable. But we must all recognize that circumstances can change quickly, which is why we have based our masking protocols on the CDC's data rather than on our personal preferences or some other metric. We hope and pray that our community continues to see low levels of the virus, but if not, we will adjust accordingly, in order to love our neighbor as Christ taught us.