



SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC CHURCH



PUBLIC MASS ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

WE ARE VERY EXCITED TO BEGIN THE REOPENING OF OUR PARISH MASSES!

The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass continues until at least June 28 in the Archdiocese of Atlanta. We will continue to live stream Masses on our parish Facebook page until further notice (see below for the Mass schedule). During this time we encourage you to recognize and treat daily Masses as fulfillment of Sunday Mass attendance. **EVERY DAY IS SUNDAY!** Please plan to attend only one Mass in person per week.

Our first public Mass will be Wednesday, June 24, 2020. Until further notice, the **English Mass schedule each week is:**

- ◆ Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6:00 PM
- ◆ Tuesday and Thursday at 12:00 Noon
- ◆ Saturday at 4:30 PM
- ◆ Sunday at 10:00 AM

Confessions will continue to be offered on Saturdays, 3:00-4:00 PM, in the Memorial Garden, weather permitting.

PLEASE do not come to church if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 or if you have been in contact with someone in the last 14 days who has tested positive for COVID-19. Of course, if you are in a high-risk category for COVID-19 or if you are the caretaker of an elderly or sick person, please remain at home.

WHAT TO EXPECT AS YOU RETURN TO MASS

- ◆ **Reservations will be required to attend Mass.** We will be limiting attendance to 100 people per Mass to accommodate CDC-recommended 6-foot social distancing guidelines.
- ◆ Parishioners should reserve their seat online. Follow the links from our parish website, www.stthomastheapostle.org
- ◆ Staff can assist those with technology issues via telephone, Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM at 770-432-8579.
- ◆ Every Thursday, reservations will be opened on a weekly basis for the following Monday through Sunday.
- ◆ **Everyone (5 years of age and older) will be required to wear a mask whenever they are on church property, including throughout Mass.**

PREPARATIONS BEFORE LEAVING HOME

- ◆ Please use restroom facilities at home before coming to the church. Church restrooms should only be used for emergencies.
- ◆ Wash your hands at home for 20 seconds with soap and water.
- ◆ Take your temperature before leaving home. If it is unusually high (or if you simply don't feel well), please stay at home and watch Mass online.
- ◆ Bring your reservation with you — on smartphone or printed. For those who called in, a reservation list will be available at the entrance to confirm the reservation.
- ◆ Bring a small hand sanitizer, if possible, and wear your face mask.
- ◆ **LEAVE EARLY! Arrive 30 to 20 minutes before Mass time.**
- ◆ Do not bring cleaning products that contain bleach.
- ◆ If you make your offering to the parish by check, please make out your check and place it in an envelope before you leave for church.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

- ◆ Arrive 30 to 20 minutes before Mass begins. **At 10 minutes before Mass time**, reserved seats will be released to people in a stand-by line, and... **YOUR SEAT WILL BE FORFEITED.**
- ◆ If you arrive a little too early, remain in your car until 30 minutes before Mass time.
- ◆ Put on your face mask before you leave your vehicle. Your mask will remain in place until you return to your vehicle after Mass.
- ◆ Maintain 6-foot social distancing at all times from anyone outside your household.
- ◆ Only the right and left doors of the main church entrance will be open for entry. Lines will be formed with marked social distancing.
- ◆ Those who arrive without a seat reservation will be asked to wait in a standby line and will be seated only if space is available after others with tickets are seated.

- ◆ You will be guided to a specific pew by a minister of hospitality, starting from the front of the church to the back. NO ONE WILL BE ABLE TO CHOOSE A PEW.
- ◆ Every other pew will be closed to maintain social distancing.
- ◆ You may be sharing a pew with another household, but 6-foot social distancing should be maintained between households at all times.
- ◆ If you have mobility concerns, please let the hospitality ministers know when you arrive at the church.
- ◆ Holy water fonts will remain empty. If you would like holy water for your home, you can bring water in a small bottle, and clergy will offer a blessing before Mass concludes.

DURING MASS

- ◆ Please wear your face mask — covering nose and mouth — for the duration of the Mass, removing it only as instructed to receive Holy Communion.
- ◆ You will be able to place your weekly gift in a collection box as you enter or exit the Church. We strongly encourage online giving available on our website.
- ◆ There should be no physical contact during the Sign of Peace or the Lord's Prayer.
- ◆ There will be no altar servers or choirs. Singing by the congregation is discouraged.

HOLY COMMUNION PROCEDURES

(See video demonstration of Communion available at www.stthomastheapostle.org/returning-to-church/)

- ◆ We encourage you to receive the Holy Eucharist in the hand. The Precious Blood of Christ will not be offered at this time.
- ◆ Use of personal hand sanitizer before and after receiving Holy Communion is strongly encouraged.
- ◆ Do not wear gloves to receive Holy Communion.
- ◆ Ministers of Hospitality will let you know when to stand up, move to the center of the aisle, and continue forward to receive the Holy Eucharist. Maintain 6-foot separation as you move forward, leaving your mask on.
- ◆ When the person before you has received the Eucharist and moved to the side to consume it, bow reverently from the marked position BEFORE approaching the Minister of Communion.
- ◆ Leaving your mask on, approach the minister. The Sacred Host will be placed on the palm of your hand as the minister carefully avoids any contact with your hand.

- ◆ After the Eucharist has been placed on the palm of your hand, step aside to the next marked spot, remove your mask, and consume the Body of Christ. Then replace your mask before returning to your seat.

DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

- ◆ Our church will empty via all available church doors.
- ◆ Please remain seated until you are directed by the Ministers of Hospitality to exit via the nearest door to where you are seated.
- ◆ Clergy will not shake hands nor engage in close conversation at exit.
- ◆ Be prepared to walk safely around the church to your vehicle, maintaining social distancing at all times.
- ◆ Do not congregate outside. Keep your mask on, and head directly to your vehicle.
- ◆ Any personal belongings left behind will be discarded immediately following Masses.

QUICK REFERENCE

Facebook Live Streamed and Public Mass Schedule:

- ◆ Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 6 PM
- ◆ Tuesday and Thursday at 12 Noon
- ◆ Saturday at 4:30 PM
- ◆ Sunday at 10 AM

Confession Schedule:

- ◆ Saturdays from 3-4 PM in the Memorial Garden, weather permitting.

Reservations for Mass:

- ◆ www.stthomastheapostle.org
- ◆ For those unable to use the online reservation system, please call the Parish Office for assistance at 770-432-8579, press 0 once the automated message begins.

View Masses online

- ◆ www.facebook.com/stthomastheapostlechurch/

Parish Website:

- ◆ www.stthomastheapostle.org