



Antigo Area Catholic Churches

St. John the Evangelist

415 6th Ave. Antigo, WI 54409
715-623-2024

SS. Mary and Hyacinth

819 3rd Ave. Antigo, WI 54409
715-623-4938

St. Wenceslaus

P.O. Box 50 Deerbrook, WI 54424
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June 1, 2020

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you are aware, this is a crazy world that we have been living in since the Coronavirus made headline news and a pandemic was declared. Since March 20th we have not been able to celebrate public Mass. This has been a very difficult time not only for those who have been unable to attend but for Fr. Zach and myself as we were not able to celebrate with you. Gradually as businesses have been able to slowly reopen with restrictions so too has the Church been able to slowly reopen for public worship. Although we could have the churches open for private prayer we were not allowed to have public gatherings for liturgical celebrations. Any kind of liturgical celebration was limited to 10 and under and was held privately.

Beginning June 1st, the Green Bay Diocese has allowed us to begin having daily Mass with limited numbers of people. We have also been allowed to have Services for the Distribution of Communion on Sunday, May 31 and June 7. The good news is that we will begin having weekend public **Masses beginning June 13 & 14** with certain restrictions. The Diocese is guiding us to have bold faith and prudent safety. So what does this mean and how is this going to play out in our parishes?

First of all it is important to remember:

- The obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains dispensed until further notice. So for those who wish, it is ok to either watch the Mass on the TV or listen to it on the radio. We will continue to livestream the Mass on Sunday morning at 9:00 am. You may also attend one of the daily Masses if you so choose.
- If you are feeling sick or running a temperature of 100.4 or higher please stay home.
- All those as defined by the health department as more vulnerable (i.e., 65+ years of age, those with compromised immune systems, those with underlying health conditions, those who are especially anxious about being in a large group, etc.) are encouraged to stay at home. Please know that we do NOT check I.D.'s at the door for age.
- Social distancing of a minimum of 6 feet between people not living in the same household must be followed.
- Non-essential gatherings will be suspended, including Children's Liturgy of the Word and post-Mass social gatherings.
- Wash your hands often, avoid touching your face and storm heaven with prayer.

To help us enter back into weekend Masses we will be observing the following regulations:

- Attendance at each individual Mass is limited to 25% percentage of occupancy. Pews will be cordoned off to help facilitate social distancing.
- Since St. John's is the largest of the 3 churches (seating 125 at 25% of occupancy) we will begin using this church for a few weeks so as to get the most people in for the 5 weekend Masses. We will reevaluate the

Mass attendance over time and if the numbers are low we will then transfer the Masses back to the other 2 churches.

- The Mass schedule will be the same as in the past: **Saturdays at 4 and 6 pm; Sundays at 7, 9 and 11 am.** The time in between Mass will be used for cleaning and disinfecting the pews.
- **Those who wish to attend a specific Mass are required to pre-register for the Mass; either on the Parish website or by contacting the office.** This will help us stay around the 125 capacity.
- Communion will only be distributed under the Body, not the Blood.
- The Sign of Peace will be omitted.
- Although St. John's will be hosting the Masses, the Ministers from SS. Mary & Hyacinth and St. Wenceslaus are being asked to assist at the Masses.
- The loose collection will go to the Parish that normally hosts the specific weekend Mass.
- Holy Water fonts and baptismal fonts will remain empty. If you want Holy Water, please contact the office for Fr. Matt or Fr. Zach's assistance.
- Hand sanitizers will be available at the church entrances. We encourage everyone to bring their own as well.
- Everyone is encouraged to wear a mask.
- Weekly bulletins will be handed out at the end of the Mass.

There is no pre-determined timeline for how long restrictions will be in place; further developments may allow for the loosening of restrictions or call for the tightening of restrictions.

These are unprecedented times that none of us ever expected to encounter in our life times. So please be patient and practice Christian charity. We will continue to keep you informed as the situation develops. In the mean time please continue to storm heaven with prayer for an end to the pandemic and the evil behind it. We will, by the grace of God, get through this together. If you need to talk please know that Fr. Zach and I are here for you. You can call us anytime.

In Christ's Peace,

Rev. Matthew J. Simonar

Rev. Zachary A. Weber