

DIOCESE OF MISSOURI PANDEMIC TASK FORCE REPORT: 2021

Bishop Johnson appointed the four-member diocesan Pandemic Task Force in 2020 to assist his office in understanding the many dimensions of COVID-19 and its implications for our shared life throughout eastern Missouri, recommend evidenced-based policies in response to the pandemic and help individual parishes deal with their distinct local circumstances and challenges.

The task force members were selected based on their academic and professional experience related to the issues occasioned by the pandemic. Medical and public health research, clinical medicine, public health policy and educational leadership are the core competencies these members embody. Together, we have crafted gathering guidelines and multiple revisions to them over the past 18 months based on the changing dynamics of COVID-19 and its variants. The current guidelines are accessible at diocesemo.org.

Although diocese-wide recommendations have been the most prominent part of our work, consultation with individual parishes has been among the most gratifying, enabling the task force to engage with local faith communities in response to their unique circumstances. In the year ahead, we hope to continue our consultative role with the Office of the Bishop, as well as congregations throughout the diocese.

Submitted by the Pandemic Task Force

The Rev. Maria L. Evans, M.D.

David Hirstius, D.O.

Beth Mosher, M.Ed.

The Rev. Marc D. Smith, Ph.D.