

Pandemic Task Force
The Rev. Dr. Maria Evans

Members: Me, Deb Goldfeder, Beth Mosher

This marks the third year of the Pandemic Task force, and hopefully, it will be our last, as COVID becomes endemic rather than a pandemic and we all seek to create a "new normal." All of us have struggled with the complicated situations the pandemic caused, but there are still many good things to report about this past year.

Our parishes continue to be composed of high numbers of vaccinated people, certainly higher than the population at large. We hope parish leadership continues to encourage members to get boosters when appropriate.

As we enter into learning to live with this disease as part of the seasonal landscape, we also hope parishes work towards a "no judgment" attitude if individuals choose to come to church masked even with the lifting of restrictions. As the numbers wax and wane over time, different people are going to have different safety needs and, hopefully, living through this experience together has taught us to work together better and consider the needs of all more thoughtfully.

These last 2.5 years have been hard on all of us, in various ways, and we learned just how much we need each other. It has been difficult to exact a standard of care that is greater than the local environment around us, yet you responded with flexibility and grace.

Another positive benefit for the diocese was deeper connections between parishes and task force members as each of us tried to customize various sets of directives to meet the needs of individual parishes. Each of us on the task force cherishes the new relationships we've built among parish leaders, and hope that those relationships can now be used in other ways to build up the body of Christ.

In short, thank you. Thank you for your flexibility in the early stages of the pandemic when fear and confusion reigned. Thank you for your ability to "roll with it" when situations changed and we would consult with the Bishop as he issued new directives. Thank you for the parish leaders who would reach out to us, and even occasionally acknowledge each of us had a difficult task.

May each of our parishes, with God's help, continue to meet the various challenges we have as we move to a more endemic model of this disease that has dominated our thoughts for so long.