



## THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MISSOURI

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### Office of the Bishop

October 11, 2021

*The Feast of St. Philip, Deacon & Evangelist*

Dear friends in Christ,

We continue in many ways to live into a time of uncertainty and unknowing as the global pandemic continues to sicken and take the lives of our siblings. Millions of people around the world have died and millions more are sick. We have sought during this time to love our neighbors in sacrificial ways that enable us share Christ's love. Many of us had hoped that this fall we would see the relaxing of mask mandates and distancing, with a return to some sense of normalcy. We all want this time of pandemic to end. We are not there yet.

As we long for a post-pandemic world, it is evident that the vaccination of our population is the best and most effective path through the pandemic. As spiritual leaders, we are called to be examples of Christ's sacrificial love, as we "bear one another's burdens and in this way you fulfill the law of Christ<sup>1</sup>." We also have a moral obligation to be an example and to encourage those we serve to be vaccinated as an act of love.

I am therefore mandating that all clergy serving pastorally or sacramentally in the Diocese of Missouri, along with lay and ordained staff members in all worshiping communities that make up the diocesan household be vaccinated by **All Saints Day, Monday, Nov. 1, 2021**. Clergy members must attest to their vaccination status by using the link below. Lay staff members must attest to their vaccination status to the clergy-in-charge or Senior Warden by the same date. Exemptions shall be made **only** for those who for medical reasons and with a doctor's note are not eligible for vaccination.

Whenever we gather for the Rite of Holy Baptism or to renew our Baptismal Covenant, we promise to seek and serve Christ in all persons, love our neighbor, and respect the dignity of every human being. We are now called to live those promises and vows by being vaccinated and by encouraging others to do the same.

Know that I am tremendously grateful for you and your ministry in showing Christ-like sacrificial love to your neighbor and yourself. You are a blessing to the household of the Diocese of Missouri and you continue to be in my prayers.

Yours in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Deon K. Johnson,  
Bishop of Missouri

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians 6:2 NRSV