



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

COVID-19 VACCINATION DIRECTIVE FROM THE BISHOPS OF MARYLAND

Dear Friends in Christ,

As leaders of faith in the Diocese of Maryland, our community of love, we have a moral obligation to protect ourselves, to protect others and to serve as trusted voices in our communities, setting an example of living as Christ's hands and voice in the world. Therefore,

Effective immediately, we are directing that the following groups be fully vaccinated against the COVID-19 coronavirus by October 18* unless they have been advised by their primary care provider not to do so: all clergy serving in any capacity in the Diocese of Maryland, members of diocesan staff, church and ministry staffs, parochial preschool and school staffs, as well as volunteers whose ministries involve continuous in-person contact with others.

We issue this requirement because vaccination is our best hope to healing the world and our communities from the pandemic. We make this directive having consulted with the Standing Committee and representatives of Diocesan Council, and it echoes our Presiding Bishop's public statement on receiving the vaccination.

Six months ago, we had hoped that we might be looking forward to a program year full of communion, both at the table and in gathering. Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rage across the United States and the world. More than four million people have died worldwide and countless others are sick—some with long-term complications with no end in sight. With the advent of the Delta and other variants, “breakthrough” cases are hospitalizing vaccinated people and children are being hospitalized at a much greater rate than they were with the original Alpha variant. We do not know the long-term health consequences these children will face as a result of having been infected, and we fear there will be more cases as schools reopen.

Thank you for all you have done to shepherd your communities through this pandemic. Your creativity, your service, your devotion and your love shine through. Now, together, as a community of love, we have this task in front of us – to get vaccinated and encourage others to do so!

The Right Rev. Eugene Taylor Sutton
Bishop of Maryland

The Right Rev. Robert W. Ihloff
Assisting Bishop of Maryland

**Revised directive issued September 7, 2021*