Memo from Archbishop David
Regarding the Government of New Brunswick
October 8 Mandate on Mandatory Masks

Archbishop David received additional guidance from the Province after the government's announcement making face masks mandatory in most indoor public spaces. Masks will add an additional layer of protection in indoor spaces. This guidance specifically affects our worship and any organized indoor gatherings we might hold or host; the government specifically noted weddings, funerals, and social events. The new guidance does not change the ability of parishes to allow one metre spacing where seating is provided. Screening prior to worship continues as previously.

Operational plans should be adjusted to take this provincial guidance into account.

New Provincial Guidance on COVID-19
- Community face masks must be worn in indoor spaces even when physical distancing of two metres can be maintained.
- During worship, the officiant, a person reading scripture and leading prayers, or a choir member leading singing are not required to wear a face mask but must maintain a physical distance of two metres from other people. All other participants must wear a face mask except when receiving Holy Communion.
- The province recommends posting signs outlining the mask requirement and explaining the use of a mask (available here); and consider offering complimentary masks for anyone who has forgotten one.
- During screening parishes can refuse entry to anyone who will not wear a face mask. The province has provided examples of valid reasons for not wearing a mask (see below). Parishes cannot request proof that someone is exempt for medical reasons.
- The face mask requirement also applies to common areas. Effectively, masks need to be worn inside our buildings except in workplaces where there is no interaction with other people.
- A face shield, gaiter, scarf, or bandanna cannot be used in place of a community face mask.
- The Province may impose fines if a parish overtly allows people to disregard this policy.

Valid reasons exist for not wearing a face mask. Medical reasons may not always be apparent. Provincial guidance provided examples:
- Children under the age of two;
- People with a medical condition or a mental health disorder that prevents them from wearing a mask;

- Situations that include a person who is deaf or hard of hearing who relies on lip reading, clear sound or facial expressions to communicate;
- A performer or officiant who is performing activities that require vocalization (like talking or singing) at a faith gathering, wedding, funeral, social event, or arts and culture event;

The provincial government has defined that an acceptable face mask is a non-medical mask composed of disposable paper or cloth. Disposable masks should be put in the garbage when soiled. Cloth masks should have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric such as cotton. Home-made masks should be made following Canada Public Health instructions. Medical masks, such as N95 masks, are not necessary and should be reserved for health-care workers.

Further Direction regarding Holy Communion and Worship
In the Diocese of Fredericton, those presiding at the eucharist should wear face masks during consecration, unless the presider has a health exemption. Communicants should wear their face mask when receiving Holy Communion and only remove or partially remove it after they have moved away from the officiant and can maintain physical distance requirements in order to consume.

Congregational singing remains a parish decision, recognizing that those in the congregation must wear a mask continuously. Those who cannot wear a mask for the reasons provided above, should not sing if not physically distant from others.

Good communication, compassion, and understanding from everyone will help us all implement this new provincial mask requirement while we worship, work, and live together.

Enclosure: draft (English only) FAQ from the Province (note the PHAC link is incorrect)