COVID Response Team plans for the fall

The COVID response team has reviewed current data and CDC recommendations. We want everyone in the congregation to understand how we have been and will be making decisions about in-person activities and masking during church activities. We have been guided by the CDC recommendations throughout the pandemic. We are especially basing our recommendations out of love and concern for the most vulnerable among us.

The CDC uses the following statistics to make decisions on in-person activities and masking.

1. Daily new cases of COVID per 100,000 people. This number should ideally be below 10, or between 10 and 15/100,000 with a decreasing trend.
2. Infectivity rate – how many people get infected when exposed to a person who tests positive for COVID. The number indicates whether the number of cases is growing or shrinking. This number needs to be below 1.00. A high number would be over 1.10
3. What percentage of COVID tests are positive on a daily basis. This should be 5%.
4. Vaccination status – people who are vaccinated can engage safely with more relaxed restrictions.

Currently in the Wayne, Washtenaw, Oakland, and Livingston County areas, this is our status:

Daily cases – 20 to 35/100,000, plateaued

Infectivity rate – 0.95 to 1.10, declining

Positive test rate – 3.3 to 8.9 %, declining

We are monitoring the data weekly and updating our recommendations to the congregation as appropriate. The recommendations are likely to change throughout the year.

Currently our recommendations are as follows:

**Per the CDC all unvaccinated people should mask indoors.**

**Sunday Service and large groups (20 or more) - Masking is required** except for the pastor and other speakers who will be more than 12 feet from others, as we have people attending who are not able to be vaccinated, especially our children. We will be singing but wearing masks while we do it. We will serve communion with brief unmasking to take the elements. Also be mindful to mask in gathering areas and hallways where children and other vulnerable people are in attendance.

People should **distance a minimum of 3 feet** from those not in their household. This is true for sitting in the pews and standing in the lobby.

**Children under 12 and their class leaders will be masked** until vaccinations are available. (Hopefully by November).

**Adult small groups** may unmask as they agree among themselves. This is directed toward adult classes and team meetings especially. Spacing between people in the room should be at 3 feet at a minimum. Room assignments will be accommodating to the numbers of people in the group.

**Groups not associated with the church** but using the building are responsible for their own masking guidelines.

**People testing positive for COVID** – If a person is tested within 72 hours of attending a church function and has a positive result, they should notify the church staff as soon as possible. The staff will notify Dr. Cherie Trembath or another member of the COVID response team. The COVID response team will be responsible for calling the positive person, finding out who might have had exposure, and notifying those potentially exposed. We will maintain the anonymity of the infected person when doing the notifications. We will follow CDC guidelines for testing and quarantining recommendations. PLEASE call as soon as you have a positive test. The state health department is understaffed and behind on notifying people, so it is our responsibility to make sure everyone is notified in a timely manner.

**COVID outbreak -** The CDC defines an outbreak as two or more people testing positive for COVID after exposure to an initial case in a group setting. This can quickly become a spreading event if immediate action is not taken. Besides all the steps taken for positive testing above, the church will shift to online ministry only for one week to prevent further spread of COVID.

Thank you for following the guidelines! With care we can have vibrant in-person and online worship and activities. Out of love and concern we can protect our most vulnerable members. We will let you know whenever the numbers indicate a change in our policies.

COVID response team