



First United Methodist Church
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Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. – Romans 1.12

May 18, 2021

Dear friends and family in Christ,

Recent announcements by the National Center for Disease Control and our Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolfe have given rise to much encouragement that we are closer to the end of the COVID-19 pandemic than we are to the beginning of it. We must remember, however, that this does not mean the pandemic is over. What it does mean is that we are not at a point in the pandemic when we are able to adjust certain protocols we have been maintaining. Last night, at a joint meeting of our Safety Team and Church Council, the leadership team of your church have decided to make the following adjustments to our protocols.

First, we will no longer be checking everyone's temperature at the door. We will continue to maintain a "Contact List" of those present for each gathering, whether it is for the 8:15 Morning Light Service, 9:30 Sunday School, or 10:45 Traditional Worship Service, or any other large group gatherings.

Secondly, we will continue to require that masks be worn upon entering the building and when moving throughout the building for these large group gatherings and we will continue to ask people to observe appropriate "Social Distancing" from others who do not live in your own household. However, **once seated in a pew, those who have been vaccinated for COVID-19 and are beyond the two-week time frame for optimal immunity after the final vaccination may remove their masks for worship.** We ask that if and when you leave your pew to move around the building or to exit, you once again wear your masks. **Those who have not been vaccinated or who are not yet beyond the time for optimal immunity after their final vaccination are asked to continue to wear their masks throughout the entire worship service,** as we all have been doing for many months.

We ask that you remember our shared commitment as United Methodists to our three General Rules: First, do no harm. Second, do all the good that you can. Third, stay in love with God. It is our living out this shared commitment that always holds before us the necessity of considering the needs of the most vulnerable among us above and beyond our

own comfort or desires. This is the kind of commitment we have seen in Jesus when he gave his own life away for the sake of the world, and it is the commitment to which Jesus has called all his disciples to follow.

While we thank God for the progress we are now seeing in the battle against COVID-19, we also recognize that this is not the time to become lackadaisical in our vigilance. And so, once again, I close with the words of the apostle Paul: “Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.” – *Romans 1.12*

By His Grace,

Pastor Tom