

July 29, 2021

TO: Churches of the Prairie Lakes Parish

- Blooming Grove, Janesville, and Waterville Evangelical UMCs

FROM: Prairie Lakes Parish Leadership Team

- Pastor Kathy, Council Chairs, and PPRC Members of each church

RE: COVID-19 UPDATES FOR CHURCHES OF THE PRAIRIE LAKES PARISH

Dear Friends in Christ,

As a courtesy FYI, we share the news listed below with you. Thank you for your patience as we navigate the ever-changing landscape of COVID-19 together!

Revised COVID-19 Indoor Masking Recommendation from the CDC

On Tuesday, 7/27/21, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released revised masking recommendations for counties across the country that are considered to have “substantial” or “high” rates of new COVID infections - most tied to the new Delta variant of the virus.

- This includes 14 counties in Minnesota, one of which is currently Waseca County.
- The revised CDC recommendation states: “To maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission.”
- This recommendation pertains to both vaccinated and unvaccinated persons.

What does this mean for churches in our Prairie Lakes Parish?

Because our three churches are either located in, or near, Waseca County, our Prairie Lakes Leadership Team has prayerfully reached the following conclusion:

- We will communicate the revised CDC masking recommendations (above) to all in our parish.
- Beginning Sunday, August 1st, the decision of whether or not to wear a mask during indoor worship will remain an individual decision for those in attendance at each church.

Revised Plans for August 1st In-Person Holy Communion

Based on the new CDC recommendations, and thanks to creative thinking among leadership team members, we welcome you to join in outdoor Communion at each church on Sunday, August 1st!

- The liturgy for Holy Communion will be moved to the end of the indoor portion of the worship service.
- Upon conclusion of the indoor portion of the service, we will gather outdoors to partake of the communion elements and blessings. Individual communion cups of grape juice will be available for pick-up from a table located outside. Pastor Kathy will distribute pieces of bread to each person - using a no-touch method.
- At the close of communion, we will join together in the Lord’s Prayer, the hymn “Sanctuary” and Pastor Kathy’s benediction. Used communion cups can then be placed in a receptacle available on the outdoor table.