

COVID-19 Information

On Thursday, May 13, the CDC released new guidelines for those who are fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

These are changes to previous guidelines about wearing a mask and physical distancing while indoors, for *those who are fully vaccinated*.

Here is an excerpt from the CDC guidance: If you've been fully vaccinated:

- You can resume activities that you did prior to the pandemic.
- You can resume activities without wearing a mask or staying 6 feet apart, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, **including local business and workplace guidance**.
- You will still need to follow guidance at your workplace and local businesses.

While these changes might be welcome, at this time, **YOUR SESSION'S HEALTH POLICIES ARE STILL IN EFFECT.**

Sessions, congregations and pastoral leaders should consider the full scope of what this change in guidance will mean for a congregation.

Although it would be easy to jump to "no masks! YAY!", care must be given to create a comprehensive re-opening plan, including consideration for those who are not fully vaccinated, and for contingency plans if local infection rates/state guidelines require changes in a "no mask" policy," if adopted.

The CDC still recommends masks, even while fully vaccinated in crowded, indoor settings, like a movie theater (or a sanctuary without physical distancing), and while we love our hymns, no guidelines recommending singing (even with masks) have been issued by the PCUSA or the American Choral Directors Association at this time.

Once your Session and pastoral leaders have time to learn of any changes at the state or local level, and consider the implications for adjustment to congregational life, they can meet to discuss any possible changes.

We know this has been a long, difficult year, but we always want to follow Jesus' commandment to "love one another." Protecting the health of others is a foundational way to do that.

Until the Session can meet, the already existing health protection guidelines in place for your congregation will stand - including for this Sunday, May 16.

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