

January 10, 2022

Dear Brothers & Sisters at Light of Christ,

In July of 2021 as Washington state's COVID-19 restrictions ended we were able to ease some of the COVID 19 restrictions we had instituted at the beginning of the pandemic. Since the beginning of the pandemic over 814,000 lives have been lost because of COVID-19 (10,000 in Washington State).

The viewpoint of many health care professionals is that the COVID-19 Pandemic Covid is not going away any time soon with the thinking is that we're not even halfway through. As Winston Churchill once said, 'Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end, but it is perhaps the end of the beginning',"

It is expected that variants will continue to develop at least for the next two years until most of the world's population is immune to the virus. Some professionals believe that it's "going to be a five-year journey". Omicron, which is now the dominant strain in the U.S. is hyper infectious with cases doubling every 1.5 to 3 days. On January 4, the US was averaging one million new COVID-19 cases per day.

The consensus is that people should again utilize the nonpharmaceutical mitigation efforts that had been so relied upon before the launch of COVID-19 vaccines. "It's not vaccines instead of masks, distancing, or ventilation or hand hygiene. Do it all. Do it consistently. Do it well."

We have a responsibility to provide a safe worship environment for our congregants. Not everyone is or can be vaccinated. The church remains agnostic as to how an individual so chooses to either partake or not of the interventions that are available to modulate their risk level. However, there are things we can do to make our worship environment safer for everyone.

Wearing masks indoors remains mandatory, except when eating or drinking. Amid the rapidly spreading Omicron variant, experts stress that we all should swap cloth masks for N95, KN95, or KF94 or 3-ply surgical masks. A cloth mask over a paper mask is deemed to be adequate. We have made disposable 3-ply masks and hand sanitizer available in the narthex and office.

We are encouraging social distancing. Six-foot markers will again be placed on the aisle and in front of the altar. While "Sharing the Peace", please be respectful of the personal space requested by others. Instead of hugging, fist bumps or even a simple wave may feel more comfortable to some.

So far, we haven't had one serious case in the church. This is great news as even one serious infection is one too many. The hope is that in time the COVID pandemic will become less severe, and we are able to return to "normal" operations. Please continue to pray for all people and an end to this terrible disease.

In His service,

Kevin Butler, Chairman Board of Elders
Duane Herredsvela, Chairman LOC Governing Board