

United Church of Christ in Robesonia

COVID Safety Plan

Revised: Sunday, May 29, 2022

As of May 29, 2022, we are updating our safety COVID safety policies to a 3 tiered system, based on the CDC Community Risk Level of our area of Low, Medium, and High risk (taking into consideration risk levels in Berks, Lebanon, and Lancaster Counties). If there is a noticed increase in risk level, the determination will be made within the church following the same process as our snow cancellation policy.

When at “**Low Risk**” we will be going back to the following:

- (1) Mask wearing is optional for everyone regardless of vaccination status even while singing. Mask wearing is encouraged (not required) when unable to social distance, and mask wearing is recommended and encouraged (not required) by those who are not vaccinated, especially when singing or when not able to be socially distant.
- (2) Mask wearing will be required for adults in nursery if a child under 9 months old is present.
- (3) Brass and woodwind instruments are permitted without being masked.
- (4) Mask wearing will be required by all over the age of 2 for singing (and brass/woodwind) when we have a baptismal service for an unvaccinated infant or baptism of other persons who are unable to be vaccinated.
- (5) As the area in the chancel is small and as leaders strive to project outward toward the congregation, all those in the chancel who are speaking, singing, or playing a brass/woodwind instrument need to be either fully vaccinated or masked.
- (6) Children may be invited to the chancel area for the children’s message.
- (7) We will not be doing contact tracing, but will continue to take attendance as we did before the pandemic.
- (8) The section of pews closest to the piano will be marked for social distancing, the rest will not. Pews will continue to be numbered, in preparation of the possibility of moving to a higher risk level with contact tracing.
- (9) Hand sanitizer will remain available.
- (10) Masks will remain available.
- (11) HVAC fans will continue to be set to “on” at least a half hour before worship, and should be set to “on” for other meetings, events, activities within the church building. HVAC filters will continue to be replaced at appropriately regular intervals (every 2 to 3 months).
- (12) Being fully vaccinated will continue to be required for those who minister to vulnerable populations (i.e. anyone who is required to have CHYLD Worker Status is still required to be fully vaccinated). *Fully vaccinated continues to refer to those who have received the appropriate number of COVID vaccination shots.
- (13) We will continue to have virtual worship available through Live Stream, Facebook Live, and Live Phone Streaming. We may or may not continue with the Zoom option, which is the least used of our different options.
- (14) Water fountains will be enabled. Reusable water bottles are encouraged. Cups will be made available.
- (15) Masking continues to be required for those who are *not* vaccinated if: (a) providing worship leadership of: greeting/ushering, speaking or singing from the chancel, or (c) playing a woodwind or brass instrument; (b) if serving food/drink; or (c) praying one-on-one or other close proximity care/prayer/fellowship.
- (16) We will continue to have the offering plates in the rear of the sanctuary, due to the need to keep the St. Paul’s and Zion offerings separate.
- (17) Persons experiencing COVID symptoms are encouraged not to participate in in-person church activities.
- (18) Possible exposure guidelines continue.
- (19) The default setup for Miller Fellowship Hall will continue to be socially distant arrangement of tables, but other arrangements are permitted.
- (20) The obligation/expectation of regular worship attendance is now resuming, with the exception of those who are potentially symptomatic (as well as the other exceptions listed in the by-laws, including: homebound/shut-in, ill/infirm/ health issues, serving in mission or military abroad, etc). For those unable to participate in-person, the obligation/expectation of participating virtually continues, if able.

Beginning on Sunday, May 29, while our community is at a “**Moderate Risk**” level we will add the following precautions:

- (1) Masking while signing (or playing woodwind or brass instrument) will be required, for those over the age of 2 years old.
- (2) Unvaccinated people over the age of 4 years old are required to mask while in the building. When a vaccine becomes available for 3-4 year olds, this guideline will change to: “Unvaccinated people over the age of 2 years old are required to mask while in the building.” (Except while eating/drinking while seated at a socially distant table or when receiving communion).
- (3) Masking is required by all over the age of 2 years old when not able to be socially distant.
- (4) Masking is required by all over the age of 2 years old for serving food/drink to others.
- (5) The greeters/ushers will be doing contact tracing. Contact tracing is encouraged for all activities.
- (6) Pew seating will be in every other pew.
- (7) Choir will need to mask while in the choir loft (if not able to social distance from others in the chancel).
- (8) In-person worship obligation is temporarily suspended; however, virtual worship obligation continues.
- (9) Water fountains will be disabled (touchless bottle fillers will continue to be enabled).
- (10) The tables in the Miller Fellowship Hall should remain set for socially distant seating.
- (11) If youth come forward for the children’s sermon, they should sit socially distant.

When at a “**High Risk**” level we will add the following precautions:

- (1) Masking is required for all over the age of 2 years old, regardless of vaccination status, throughout worship and when unable to be socially distant. (Except for worship leaders in their appropriate socially distant seating).
- (2) Food/drink will not be served indoors. Meals will be take out only.
- (3) In addition to seating in every other pew, when sharing a pew, spacing between different households is to be observed.
- (4) Youth should remain in their pews for the children’s sermon.

By May 29, there will be signs on the entrance doors to inform participants at what level we are operating. The status will also be included on our website. Changes (and often current status) will also be communicated through our weekly *E-Newsletter*.

Our COVID safety policies can be found on our website. The above safety measures were published in the May newsletter, but will not be added to our website until after May 22, to avoid confusion about the policies. We are hoping that by giving you more advance noticed that our two congregations can more easily ease into this new three tiered system, and so everyone has a greater sense of what to expect in advance.

As always, as medical information changes, our COVID Safety Policies are subject to change.

If you have not yet received the COVID vaccine, please contact your primary medical provider to inquire if the vaccine is appropriate for you. If you are vaccinated, but have not yet received a booster, please contact your primary medical provider to inquire if a booster shot is appropriate for you.