

SELC COVID-19 PROTOCOL UPDATE

In order to keep everyone as safe as possible throughout the two years of this pandemic, your SELC Covid-19 Response Team has consistently followed the recommendations of the CDC and other medical authorities in establishing protocols, such as asking everyone to wear masks while indoors at church. Since the CDC and other authorities, including infection specialist hospital staff, now recommend that, when counties are at “medium” range as we are now, *“People may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask,”* the Response Team decided at our March 6th meeting **to make masks optional in worship and other church settings**. (For further information and CDC updates on infection ratings, see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>).

We are very grateful that things have come to this point. However, this doesn't mean the pandemic is over. We still ask everyone to follow established protocols such as frequent hand washing, testing, and staying home when sick. Quarantine or isolation when necessary (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html> for guidance on when to quarantine or isolate). The Embry free testing site is still active in our parking lot for your convenience. We continue to urge that everyone who hasn't been updated with vaccines and boosters do so soon as possible.

We acknowledge and respect that some SELC members and friends- especially the health vulnerable- may still have concerns regarding risks of infection. We ask everyone to respect the fact that some people will still choose to wear masks and practice social distancing. So, we also ask that the side wings of pews in the sanctuary continue to be reserved ONLY for those who choose to be masked and distanced.

This decision also means that communion around the altar rail will again be offered. The individual communion “fellowship cups” that we have been using will still be made available for those who are not yet comfortable receiving communion around the altar. They can be picked up on the way into worship. Musicians and singers may also choose whether they want to wear a mask or not.

Inside fellowship events featuring food will resume once the risk level is in the “low” or green zone. Outside fellowship events with food continue to be allowed.

We hope and pray that trends continue to improve. If, however, there is another Covid surge and the CDC resumes recommending masks for all, we reserve the right to again make that request, as disappointing as that may be. (Think of it kind of like having an umbrella that is brought out when it rains but is kept in the closet otherwise). Our goal continues to be the safety of all. There is no guarantee that what we do mitigates all risks but we do the best we can with the most reliable information available.

Thank you very much for your patience, understanding, and compassion. It has been long and challenging time for all of us. Keep praying for our medical professionals, for health and healing to all and for a complete end to this pandemic world-wide. And be sure to express your thanks to our Response Team members when you see them: Janet Bobar, Jim Clevon, Beth Dechant, Sandy Hall, Mignonne Hollis, Lynn Light, Joanna Michelich, Lynette

Nowlan, Pastor Mark, Linda Perry, Becky Randall, Larry Rewis, Sandy Stephenson, and Intern Pastor Diana Washington. They have been very dedicated and faithful in carrying out their responsibility under God to you and to our community at large.