



Timberlake United Methodist Church
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I'm pleased to tell you today that after monitoring COVID-19 trends in Central Virginia, Council has determined that we can safely relax some of our public health precautions.

This means that those who are fully vaccinated and those who are under the age of 5 may choose whether or not to wear masks during services and for other church-related business inside the building that isn't otherwise covered by state or federal regulations (e.g. employees and Child Development Center activities). Life groups may also resume shared meals in the building as long as all participants are vaccinated.

Because we are a thriving multigenerational church, if you have chosen not to be vaccinated, please respect the discernment of Council and continue to wear your mask. I ask this on behalf of our children, and our brothers and sisters whose immune systems are compromised and are at risk of serious consequences if they are infected. Their health and the consideration you demonstrate for their wellbeing isn't a political statement, nor an opportunity to exercise personal preference. Given our relatively low rates of vaccination locally and the small number of people who wore masks to worship over the summer, I am asking that we do better this season.

For all, if you or a member of your household is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please stay home and enjoy our excellent online worship offerings.

On a personal note, if you have been worshipping online with us exclusively during the pandemic, whether you are a longtime member or someone who found us on social media, **you are missed**. If you've been considering when to come and join us in person, please come this Sunday.

Finally, for those who want more insight into Council's decision-making process, we have considered the following public health metrics. You can see them for yourself on the Virginia Department of Health and Centra Health websites. They are not absolute "on/off" thresholds, and we look for trends rather than one-day information to avoid putting people in and out of masks week-to-week.

1. For the Central Virginia Health District, is the 7-day average number of daily new cases reported in a sustained trend above or below 70?
2. When taken with the above information, is the Central Virginia Health District 7-day average number of daily new deaths reported above or at or below 1?
3. When taken with the above information, is the Lynchburg COVID-19 hospital census over or under 50 patients? Is the ICU COVID census over or under 15? As an indicator of waning vaccine protection, what percentage of those hospitalized have been vaccinated?

If you have questions or feedback, please send me a note at church.council@timberlakeumc.org. I look forward to seeing you and your families this Sunday at Timberlake.

Sincerely,

Chris Dumond
Timberlake Council Chairman

Our mission is to reach, feed, and release people to be the hands and feet of Jesus.