



MESSIAH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

We seek to answer God's call to love

Senior Pastor: Andrew Plocher
Associate Pastor: Molly Eversoll

Parish Administrator: Jennifer Dodge
Administrative Assistant: Inga Banitt

September 10, 2021

Dear Messiah Family and Friends,

Earlier this year Messiah's Council set forth a two-stage plan for our return to in-person worship. We began in Stage A the first weekend in July and are currently in Stage B (but with masking highly recommended).

As you may already know, the current rates of infection and positive test results are rising in Marquette County. Currently Marquette County is: 64% vaccinated (ages 12+), averaging 26/100k (7-day avg.) cases, and positive tests at 14.7%. (*data from NYTimes, covidactnow.org*) The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) now considers Marquette County in the "high" level of community transmission of the coronavirus. In contrast, the threshold our Council used to begin Stage A included the following: 50-70% vaccination rate, averaging 5-10/100k cases, and positive tests below 10%.

Our Council and Task Force have continually monitored the situation and consulted governmental, denominational, and scientific resources on the current recommendations given our circumstances. ***At their meeting on September 9, Messiah's Council unanimously decided to move our congregation back into Stage A of our return to in-person worship plan.***

This means that ***masking is once again required***, distancing is encouraged, and there will be no food or drinks at gatherings. You will notice some small shifts in worship (e.g. a return to individual communion cups, no passing of the offering plate) and be asked to sign in upon entering the building (or fill out a card for worship). The Council is permitting congregational and choral singing, but only when masks are worn.

While none of us desire to move backward, and all of us are weary of the pandemic, we are God's beloved community together. This means that we will continue to love one another, to care for the vulnerable, and to do all that we can to reduce the transmission of a virus that has shown itself to be a greater risk than many of us ever imagined, even to those of us who have been vaccinated.

Thank you for your continued adaptability, patience, and faithfulness. If you have any questions about this change, please don't hesitate to reach out to either Pr. Molly or myself, or to a Council member.

In Christ,

Andrew Plocher, Sr. Pastor

