

Reopening Task Force Update

The Reopening Task Force (RTF) is pleased to present this update as follow-up to the RTF report in the November VOICE. Please see the November VOICE RTF report for further context.

The RTF has continued to monitor COVID infection data in Connecticut over this past month, with ongoing focus on the four towns (Avon, Canton, Farmington, Simsbury) in which the majority of our St. Matthew family resides. The RTF has continued to evaluate these data in context of:

- ELCA theological practices
- Physical safety for all who wish to attend St. Matthew services, small group meetings, and related activities in-person.

Based on the Church Council discussion during its November 16th meeting, the following protocol is effective Sunday December 5th relative to in-person Sunday services in the Sanctuary:

- **Masks continue to be required upon entering and exiting the building.**
- **All individuals attending Sunday services in the Sanctuary are required to wear masks as you enter the Sanctuary and find your seat in the pew. Mask wearing is required again at the close of the service, as you exit the Sanctuary.**
- **For those individuals currently vaccinated:**
 - **Continued mask wearing throughout the service is highly recommended.**
 - **If you choose to, you may remove your mask while you are in the pew.**
- **For those individuals not currently vaccinated:**
 - **Mask wearing throughout the service continues to be required.**

The seating plan in the Sanctuary will continue as presently configured, to preserve social distancing during the services.

Live stream of the 8.30am services will also continue, for those who prefer to worship via on-line technology.

This collective approach is designed to further enhance our Lutheran theological practices in relation to safe public health measures in the Sanctuary.

- As previously reported throughout this year, high quality air filtration and ventilation as well as comprehensive cleaning protocols have continued to protect our St. Matthew congregation, including those most vulnerable to COVID infection, in the Sanctuary and throughout the rest of the building. The ever-increasing access to and utilization of vaccinations by members of the congregations is quite encouraging too.
- As noted above, live-streaming of the 8.30am Sunday services will continue as a worship option as well.

As always, each of us continues to have an individual choice to attend Sunday services either in-person or via on-line.

The RTF also notes that these in-person plans will continue to evolve, based on COVID data in Connecticut and in the Farmington Valley. There is the possibility that, in the coming weeks or months, the RTF may need to recommend to Church Council a return to required mask wearing for all in-person worshippers in the Sanctuary if COVID conditions become more severe in our region.

We continue to appreciate everyone's patience and support as we all navigate these challenging times. As always, the RTF is pleased to address any questions or concerns.