

January 7, 2022

Dear Friends,

As we enter the new year and continue to hear about the stresses brought to healthcare, education, and many different settings as a result of the high level of community spread of the coronavirus and its current variant, your safety and well-being continues to weigh heavily on us. The current situation makes it highly likely that any community gathering we offer will include people who are carrying the coronavirus. As we look at the coming month, we want to provide opportunities to honor the varying degrees of vulnerability as well as risk tolerance of people in our community of faith.

The safest way to worship at this time continues to be through our **Livestream worship on Sunday mornings at 8:55 am**, or a time convenient to you. Please seriously consider this option if you are not fully vaccinated, immunocompromised or otherwise vulnerable (or in close contact with someone who is), or experiencing any symptoms of illness. If you miss the opportunity to receive communion when you worship remotely, please reach out to one of the pastors and we will work with you to make arrangements for you to receive communion.

**We will continue to offer in-person Sunday morning worship service at 8:55 am.** The addition of a new sanctuary fan, along with masking, adds an added layer of protection to this gathering. In-person, indoor worship is safest for those who are fully vaccinated and boosted, but it is not without risk. If you would like to worship in-person, we strongly urge you to take a rapid COVID test before coming to church. We continue to have free COVID rapid-testing kits available through Monroe County's distribution program. These test kits are available through the church office as long as supplies last. While a negative test result is neither required, nor a guarantee, taking this additional precaution may help to limit the spread of the virus.

In the month of January we have planned to engage the congregation in conversation and Q&A with our anniversary guests and with our pastors as part of our faith formation time at 10:15 each Sunday. **Beginning this Sunday, January 9 at 10:15 am and continuing throughout the month, we will make these live conversations that take place in the sanctuary available via Zoom**, so that there is an opportunity for you to participate, even if you are not comfortable being physically present.

After nearly two long years, we share your fatigue and your wish for a world where we can gather freely and without the need to change plans. We give thanks for this community of faith and for your agility in adapting the changing circumstances that continue to surround us. We give thanks for your faithful responses to these circumstances – wearing masks, getting vaccinated and/or boosted (if eligible), and prioritizing safety over preference – which embodies our faith in the One who calls us to love another as God loves us.

In Epiphany Light,

Pastor Hoffman and Pastor Amy

