

COVID Task Force Update

The Zion COVID Task force met this past week and we are glad to announce a relaxation in our safety protocols related to the pandemic. As always, the health and welfare of our congregation is our top priority. According to the CDC, Grand Forks County is currently in a time of Low Risk related to COVID. Because of this we offer the following guidelines:

1. Masking will currently be considered optional during our time at Zion. We recognize that some will feel safer if they wear masks. Others will feel more comfortable not wearing masks. Either choice is acceptable. You are encouraged to wear a mask if you have not been vaccinated or if you have been recently exposed to the virus. If you are not feeling well and think you might be contagious, please stay home and watch the Zion service online.
2. We encourage everyone to be vaccinated against COVID and get booster shots as recommended. This will generally keep you and those around you safer. Please follow the advice of your health care provider regarding vaccination recommendations. Most people appear to enjoy greater immunity when they keep their vaccinations current. However, there are some for whom the vaccination may not be advisable. Please check with your personal health care professional. COVID testing is encouraged for anyone who is symptomatic.
3. It is okay to shake hands if you choose to. We will continue to encourage smiling and waving at others in the congregation during our time of sharing the peace, but hand shaking is also permitted. Hand sanitizer will continue to be made available throughout the church.
4. Eating together will be permitted on a limited basis. For example, coffee and cookies will be planned for the second Sunday of each month during the summer. Waffle Wednesday will continue the same as it has during the last few months. Love Feast will continue to offer meals on a drive-through basis. However, potlucks and other communal meals where there is more likely to be sharing of utensils will be discouraged for the time being. (We will reassess this in the fall.)
5. Social distancing is still encouraged but will no longer be required. Pews will not be blocked off or limited in use.
6. Communion will continue to be conducted using individual packets of juice and wafers. (This will also be reassessed in the fall.)
7. Offerings will continue to be collected in the offering plates placed at the back of the sanctuary. Ushers will occasionally come down the aisles with the offering plates in case someone has an offering that they forgot to drop off.

Thank you for the care you have taken for yourself and for others in this most challenging time. For your health and protection, the Zion COVID Task Force will continue to monitor the risk level in the Grand Forks area, along with the latest CDC guidelines. We will continue to occasionally modify our recommendations as conditions change. We are firmly committed to doing what is in the best interest for the overall health of our Zion community.

Please feel free to contact Task Force members with questions or concerns: David Perry, chair; Pastor Chang; Deb Glennen; Cheryl Klamm; Brad Loiland; Cheryl Loiland; and Wayne Seames.