

**COVID-19 ANNOUNCEMENT FROM YOUR SESSION**  
**JANUARY 14, 2022**

In response to the rapid upsurge in COVID cases (locally and beyond) due to the highly transmissible Omicron variant, your Rapid Response Team met on Tuesday to discern whether or not we should suspend in-person worship temporarily or consider alternative increased safety protocols. Dr. Larry Clouse, a member of the team, presented an extremely informative power point slide show covering the authoritative science regarding the Omicron variant, masking, vaccination efficacy, and factors relevant to the decision at hand. The team's rationale and recommendations were sent to the Session for action.

**As of this morning, the Session has unanimously approved remaining open for worship at this time *and* implementing a new set of protocols effective immediately.** We are sending you this special e-blast announcement today to inform our FPC community of this decision as quickly and as widely as possible. Pastor Laurie will also announce it on Sunday, January 16, from the pulpit.

**Rationale:**

Given the nearly 90% vaccination rate at FPC and mask-wearing compliance, the size and excellent air circulation in our sanctuary, as well as the option to worship at home with livestream for all who prefer to stay home, we arrived at the following consensus: More good would be accomplished by continuing to hold in-person worship with increased safety protocols than by ceasing to offer any form of in-person worship for the next 6 weeks. Good would include: education about and help with members obtaining boosters, mitigation strategies & supplies distributed, as well as the spiritual and social uplift of gathering weekly for worship in these stressful times.

**Actions:**

FPC will continue to offer in person worship with live stream option AND increase safety protocols as follows:

**PROTOCOLS UPON ENTERING THE BUILDING AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:**

- A sizable poster will be displayed on every entry door:  
**PLEASE DO NOT ENTER IF YOU HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS\***  
**MASKS ARE REQUIRED FOR ANYONE INSIDE THIS BUILDING**  
*(N95 masks are available inside if you need one. They are 10 to 100 times more effective than other masks.)*  
**\*Any of the following symptoms may be covid related**, they include: Loss of taste or smell, Fever or chills, Cough, Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea
- N95 masks will be handed out by the deacons or greeters on Sunday morning, as opposed to being available in a box or basket.

**PROTOCOLS DURING WORSHIP WILL BE AMENDED AS FOLLOWS:**

- Worshippers will no longer be moving from their pew to "pass the peace"
- Offering will not be collected with plates passed down the pews, we will use the wooden church and the blessing box in the Narthex
- Worshippers will be encouraged to spread out across the whole sanctuary.
- The service will be planned to last under 60 minutes.

**PROTOCOLS FOLLOWING WORSHIP**

- Congregation will be asked to inform the church office as soon as possible if they test positive after attending church. In the event someone tests positive within this window of concern, the Reopening Work Group will reconvene to discuss possible actions.

**ADDITIONAL ACTION:**

- Larry Clouse's narrated power point presentation will be made available by eblast, and on our Facebook and Web site.