|  |
| --- |
| *Covid Update August 26, 2021*  *Ephesians 4:2**Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*  Dear Fellow Saints,  I write to you today to inform you of updates from our Regathering Task force for the safety of our church family during this time of renewed pandemic. Our church family has been intimately affected by Covid during this past week. Your flock note news updates and prayer requests alone witness to this impact.  The statistics for Columbia hospitals of cases are rising in ICU’s and intubations (the majority are non-vaccinated, but not all), twice as many students and teachers are out on leave because of Covid exposures or illness as the peak of Covid last year, and families and workplaces are having to pivot once again to try to cover the losses as families care for one another during this crucial time.  It is clear that the Delta Variant is not playing around and we are all called to act in Christian love and take as many precautions as we can. Our former Moderator of PC(USA), Bruce Reyes Chow said it this way:  What I do know is the following:   * **None of us is an exception.**Our family has been careful, wearing masks, taking precautions, socially distancing and yet still we were infected. * **The pandemic is still going strong.** Sadly, until we as a country and world figure this out and rediscover a commitment to the common good, we will live in this unknown space for a very long time. * **We could be much worse off.** While COVID gave us our family a scare and run for our money with fever, cough, headaches, etc., because we are vaccinated, we know that our chances of being hospitalized or dying are low. I want the same for you. * **I do not want to preside over your funeral.**I genuinely want you to get vaccinated if not already. What we know is that those who are unvaccinated are much more likely to die if infected. This is not overreacting or shaming, but simply a plea to keep yourself and others around you safe. * **Please remain diligent and disciplined.** In order to keep one another healthy and those who have sacrificed for us, we must continue to mask and distance, especially to protect our children, those with other medical issues, and anyone else not able to receive the vaccination.   Bruce Reyes Chow also acknowledged the tension in our country by saying: I know that many of you have very strong opinions about vaccinations, the pandemic, and the politics of it all, but let me emphasize that, at the end of the day, we must see one another as members of the Body of Christ — **when one part suffers, we all suffer, when one rejoices, we all rejoice.**Our compassion and empathy should not be contingent upon political agreement, so please continue to hold all — ALL — who are being impacted by Covid-19 in your prayers.  All this to let you know that your regathering team has met virtually and opted in the interest and love of one another to take the following precautions, beginning this Sunday on campus.   1. We will remain in person for worship and events IF you are wearing a mask. If you decide not to wear a mask, please do not attend. 2. If you feel uncomfortable attending in person, please join us on Zoom or you tube. Send a FB note, text or email to any of your pastors to let us know you were with us in spirit if you are not on zoom! As always we would love to talk with you about your worship and life experiences. 3. We will only sing the final hymn during worship to minimalize the spread of particles in the air and our exposure time together, exiting immediately following. 4. We will continue to shorten the worship service to limit exposure time in one space. 5. We encourage you to socially distance as we worship with those who are not your family. 6. ReShape will still occur, with prepackaged meals, social distancing and limited time inside together with masks securely covering your mouth and nose as we discern God’s call on our church and life together.   When Jesus says to love God and love one another, It’s all that easy and it’s all that hard. For now, let us practice this love in tangible ways. |
| Your Pastor, Jana |
|  |
|  |