

May 14, 2021

Dear New Lifers,

There is another big positive step in our pandemic journey towards resuming our normal faith community activities.

“The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention revised its guidance on mask-wearing Thursday to [allow fully vaccinated people to go maskless indoors](#) most of the time. Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker said he would follow the science and revise Illinois' statewide mask mandate to bring it in line with the latest CDC recommendations.” (Source: [www.Patch.com](http://www.Patch.com), May 13, 2021)

This is a cause for celebration for many people! It may cause some anxiety for others. It can be hard to change a safety routine that we have been living with for the last year and 2 months!

We are grateful that New Life is really good at making room for everyone, allowing people to come as they are. Just as we have been in the past, we strive to be kind and gentle with everyone's personal experience with COVID. Respecting the varying comfort levels as we re-emerge as a community of faith gathering again, keeps us whole and united.

So for those of you who are fully vaccinated and ready to show your smile, you may choose to be mask less at our indoor or outdoor worship services.

For those of you who just aren't ready yet, you can certainly choose to still wear a mask and still find a welcome here.

For those of you who aren't fully vaccinated yet, current guidance is that you continue to wear a mask for your own health and safety.

To help you anticipate what our indoor worship will look like now, here are some updates.

- All the chairs have been added back into the sanctuary. This will allow more people to attend as well as giving greater options for seating. There is no need to register to attend.
- When selecting your seat, check in with others in the row about their comfort level with sitting right next to each other or if they prefer some physical distance. Let's trust each other to be honest.
- If you are ready to give handshakes or hugs, ask for consent prior and respect your neighbor's response.
- If you are ready to catch up with old friends or meet new friends, ask about their comfort level with physical distance and respect their response.

As a community, we value this open communication and strive to respect everyone's comfort levels with masks, distancing, and contact.

If you're not ready yet to worship in-person, we understand. Everyone needs to personally figure out what they are comfortable with and transition in their own time. We support that thought process and are still committed to supporting your needs by continuing to offer online worship opportunities with our livestream on Sunday mornings.

We have said all along, "This is temporary. Keep praying. Stay connected. You are loved and missed." And now we are closer than ever to being back together, to praying together, to being able to connect in person and expressing how much you are loved and were missed over the past year. So now we can say...

This is new.

Keep praying.

Stay connected.

You are welcome as you are.

Pastor Rakel

*P.S. Just wanted to share some resources that might be helpful to aid in your understanding of new guidance as well as information about vaccinations.*

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>

<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccine-faq>