

Dear Members and Friends of Trinity,

We are not yet out of the global pandemic. Deaths from a variant strain is currently ravaging the people of India. Globally, we have lost over three and a quarter million people. In the U.S., we have lost more than 580,000 people, and in Florida alone, we have lost nearly 36,000 people. The numbers in Volusia County are still not in the safe category. As of the day of writing this, we are still in the “high risk” category. We are to be under in all three of these categories: less than 10 new cases per 100k people, less than a 5% Positive Test Rate, and less than 70% Intensive Care Unit capacity. Today (5/13), we are only under the Positive Test Rate at 4.8%. We have 15.1 daily new cases per 100k and our ICU capacity is at 85%. **It is clear that the pandemic is not over globally, nationally, or even in Volusia County.**

Yet, there are glimmers of hope. Trinity’s members have been faithfully getting vaccinated. We need to encourage everyone to get vaccinated so that the virus does not have the “fuel” to keep “burning” through our communities. **It is due to the high numbers of people who attend Trinity who have been vaccinated, however, that we feel fairly confident that we can resume worshiping inside. This letter is to inform you that we will be worshiping inside beginning this Sunday, May 16 at 9:30 am, and to explain what you will expect when you attend.**

**Check-in** - One of our ushers will check you in. We are still asked to do this just in case there is an outbreak to those who have not yet been vaccinated.

**Masks** - You will be required to wear a mask during worship since not everyone has been vaccinated. There are also some people who cannot get the vaccine due to certain health conditions. Out of love for our neighbors, we will wear our masks over both our mouths and our noses. *Those who refuse to wear a mask will be asked to leave as they are not thinking about their neighbor, but only about themselves and their comfort. This is contrary to the gospel.*

**Physical distancing** - As you enter the sanctuary you will notice blue painter’s tape on the tops of the pews designating the places you may sit. This marks out the social distancing requirements for our space. You can sit in front of the blue taped sections on each pew. You can also sit with people who are in your “bubble” (people who are from another household that you have been regularly visiting) in the same blue-taped section.

**Fellowship Hall overflow** - If you are uncomfortable being in the sanctuary, where many people will be, we will also have the fellowship hall open where you can watch the service via big-screen TV. This will also serve as the ‘overflow’ area should we need more seating.

**Singing** – Singing inside with others is one of the more-risky activities to do during this pandemic. Singing requires us to use our lungs heavily, which can release a lot of aerosols into the room. According to a website developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) that analyzes the size of the room, the quality of the air handling equipment, the type of

activity, the age and number of participants, and what is known about how the corona-virus spreads, we think it is relatively safe for us to sing “softly and tenderly” with our masks on.

**Communion** - We will have communion. To begin with, we will be distributing the bread (wafer) only and we will have two stations up front to ensure that communion moves quickly to reduce the amount of time in the sanctuary. The ushers will dismiss you row-by-row so that there are not people bunching up together in line. We ask that you remain 6-feet apart from those in the next group, and that you pass by people in the other line quickly. If there are people in the fellowship hall, we will bring communion to them after we have communed everyone in the sanctuary.

**Dismissal** – Ushers will dismiss you, row-by-row, so that there is no bunching up. We ask that you leave the sanctuary quickly and pass through the narthex and lanai. If you want to talk with your friends and neighbors, please do so outside where you can be distanced and where the virus dissipates quickly.

I know this is a lot of information. I know this is a very challenging time for us as we continue to transition to a new normal after the pandemic. Some of our members have been eager to get back into the sanctuary. Other members are more tentative. Still others may not come back until the pandemic is absolutely finished. It is ok to feel what you are feeling, but let us also be sensitive to others who may not be in the same emotional place that we are. As I have said all along: With God’s help, we will get through this together.

Peace be with you all...

Pastor Tim