

**Kirk of Kildaire**  
**Safe Gathering Task Force**

**Covid-19 Policy Update – May 18, 2022**

The Safe Gathering Task Force met today to discuss the status of the pandemic and whether there should be continued differentiation between those who are fully vaccinated/boosted and others. The consensus was that the high number of breakthrough infections among the fully vaccinated/boosted means that we should no longer view these groups separately. If an Omicron-specific booster becomes available in the fall, we will revisit this issue.

The latest data from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services shows that the average number of new hospitalizations per day is just below 75. Because the trend is upward, this means that current Kirk policy will likely require us to return to wearing masks for indoor activities after 5/25.

Following are the latest policies:

**Masks for indoor activities (masks not required for outdoor activities)**

- ❖ As long as average daily new hospitalizations are below 75, masks are optional for worship and other functions where there are no children below the age of 5.
- ❖ When new hospitalizations are 75 or above, masks are required except for worship leaders when speaking and choir members when singing anthems, responses, or benedictions.
  - For children under the age of 5, nursery care is offered, so that they will not be exposed to potential infection from adults not wearing masks in worship.
  - For worship, a section of the last three rows of the center pews is reserved for families with children ages 5-11 who are not yet fully vaccinated. Another section is reserved for immunocompromised people. All individuals sitting in these rows must wear masks.
- ❖ Anyone in the outer office must don a mask when someone arrives who is wearing a mask. Thus, all staff should carry a mask with them. When in their personal workspace, masks are not required for staff regardless of the number of hospitalizations.
  - When daily new hospitalizations are 75 or above, masks are required in the office hallways and workroom.

Note: Those whose booster was more than 3-4 months ago may well contract an Omicron variant if they do not wear a well-fitting mask. However, fully vaccinated/boosted people with no significant risk factors will most likely not require hospitalization.

*We urge people with the following risk factors to consider wearing an N95, KN95, or KF94 mask:*

- *Age over 65, diabetes, obesity, history of cancer, history of stroke, history of smoking, chronic lung disease, chronic kidney disease, chronic liver disease, heart disease, currently pregnant or less than 42 days since the end of pregnancy.*
- *Immune compromised.*

## **Social distancing**

Until the seven-day average is below 25:

- ❖ Three feet social distancing between members of different households is required.
- ❖ Choir members must be spaced 3 feet horizontally and 6 feet front to back.

## **Testing requirements**

Staff are no longer required to be tested weekly depending upon vaccination status.

- The lack of clear effectiveness of the current boosters with respect to preventing Omicron infections and problems with timing of testing relative to when someone is infectious mean that this program has diminished value.

Testing is, however, required as outlined in the exposure protocol (below) and whenever someone has any two of the following symptoms:

- Fever, chills, or night sweats
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Congestion or runny nose
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- New loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea

## **Worship materials**

Because surface transmission of Covid-19 is quite rare, we have returned Bibles, hymnals, and other materials to the pews.

Communion can now be offered by intinction or passing of communion elements down the rows.

- ❖ Individuals serving communion should wear masks as they will come closer than three feet to those receiving communion elements.
- ❖ Individuals serving communion should sanitize their hands just prior to serving to avoid transmission of other viruses/bacteria that can spread via surface transmission.

## **Consumption of food and drink**

There are no longer restrictions on these activities, however the period of meal consumption should not exceed 20 minutes so that those with risk factors are not exposed to excessive infection potential.

## **Revised Covid-19 Exposure and Positive Test Policy**

### **5/18/2022**

The CDC has recently issued less stringent guidance with respect to what people should do after receipt of a positive Covid-19 test result or exposure to someone with Covid-19. This is revised periodically based on research findings.

#### **Background**

Research now shows that people are most contagious 1-2 days before and 2-3 days after experiencing symptoms. This is the basis for the shortened isolation periods outlined below.

Note that where masking is specified, a well-fitting mask is required. Most cloth masks and even surgical masks do not qualify because they have too many gaps around the edges. KN-95, KF-94 and N-95 masks are well-fitting as is double-masking with a cloth mask over a surgical mask.

- ❖ CDC uses the term “isolation” to refer to behavior after testing positive and “quarantine” to refer to behavior after close contact with someone known to have Covid-19. This is a technical difference – the term “isolation” is used exclusively in this document.

Where a Covid-19 test is indicated, a rapid (antigen) test is fully acceptable, and at this point in the pandemic is preferable as a follow-up test after an initial positive PCR or antigen test. After an initial positive test and resolution of symptoms, an antigen test will return a positive result if you are still infectious to others. PCR tests may continue to give positive results by detecting genetic viral fragments when you are not infectious.

#### **Counting days after exposure or receiving a positive test**

Day 0 is the day of exposure/day of specimen collection for a positive test/day of the appearance of symptoms. Thus, for example, if you received a positive result and you were tested on a Monday, Day 1 would be Tuesday and Day 5 would be Saturday.

#### **What to Do After a Positive Covid-19 Test**

##### ***If no symptoms (asymptomatic)***

- ❖ Isolate for 5 days, then wear a mask when around others for 5 more days.

##### ***If symptoms***

- ❖ Isolate for at least five days. if you are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and your other symptoms are improving (but no earlier than 5 days), you can end isolation but must wear a mask for five additional days.
  - Many in the media have said that you can end isolation after 5 days. This is not true. You must also have improving symptoms and no fever for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication.

##### **If you have severe Covid-19 or are immunocompromised**

People who are severely ill with COVID-19 (including those who were hospitalized or required intensive care or ventilation support) and people with compromised immune systems might need to isolate at home longer. They may also require testing with a PCR test to determine when they can be around others. CDC recommends an isolation period of at least 10 and up to 20 days for people who were severely ill with

COVID-19 and for people with weakened immune systems. Consult with your healthcare provider about when you can resume being around other people.

### **What to do After Close Contact with Someone Who Has Covid-19**

We define this as less than 3 feet for 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period.

***If symptoms occur, isolate for a minimum of 5 days. Get tested after 5 days. If the test is negative, you may return to the Kirk. If the test is positive, follow the above policy for a positive test.***

***If no symptoms and contact was of short duration outside of your household: Boosted or received a second dose of Pfizer/Moderna in last 5 months or received J&J in last 2 months/had a confirmed Covid infection in the last 90 days***

- ❖ No isolation required but wear a mask for 10 days after exposure. A test is recommended 5 days after exposure. Watch for symptoms for 10 days and get tested if they occur. If you test positive, follow the above protocol for positive test results.

***If no symptoms: All others (including fully vaccinated/boosted where your exposure was to someone in your household)***

- ❖ Isolate for 5 days after exposure. Get tested after 5 days; if you test positive, follow the protocol for a positive test. Wear a mask for an additional 5 days in all settings. Watch for symptoms for 10 days and get tested if they occur. If you test positive, follow the above protocol for positive test results.

### **Questions?**

If you have questions about what you should do in the above circumstances, contact our Parish Nurse, Caryn Mastalli: [cmastalli@kirkofkildaire.org](mailto:cmastalli@kirkofkildaire.org)