



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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May 17th, 2021

Dear People of Trinity,

As many of you know, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently updated its guidance on mitigation practices regarding coronavirus. Soon after, the state of Pennsylvania adjusted its mitigation rules and guidance to match the CDC. Trinity's Council met to review and discern our own path forward this past Sunday.

We recognize inside the CDC guidance that fully vaccinated people are welcome to resume behavior that largely mirrors pre-pandemic life. While there are noted exceptions (continued deference to state, local, and contextual (per business, for example) expectations), the greatest note is that folks who are unvaccinated – whether that is due to a desire not to receive the vaccine, an inability to receive the vaccine, or being ineligible by age to receive the vaccine – continue to practice safe mitigation efforts to protect themselves from the virus.

Within Trinity, we have several children and youth that are not yet eligible to receive the vaccine. Recognizing that our care must include persons of all ages, Trinity's Council decided to follow CDC guidance and set up our worshipping patterns to provide a good opportunity for all.

Just as I have written before, June 6th will mark Trinity's return to outdoor worship with us continuing to start worship at 9am each Sunday. We will have singing (1st two Sundays of each month) and non-singing (2nd two Sundays of each month) Sundays. All services will continue to be available via Zoom and uploaded to YouTube following the service. Those who have been fully vaccinated are welcome to attend and fully participate without masks. Those who have not been fully vaccinated should strongly consider the guidance of the CDC. We will trust each member of the community to make a decision on how to interact and participate with the number of worship opportunities offered. Should there be inclement weather for any Sunday, our move indoors will still welcome those who are fully vaccinated to participate without masks. We will not, however, sing, noting that the CDC continues to list singing in an indoor chorus as one of the least safe activities for the unvaccinated, including children who are not yet eligible for a vaccine.

Each ministry of Trinity, including committees, Council, Sunday School, bible studies, and the like, are given the same permissions: for the fully vaccinated to participate without masks, and for the unvaccinated to strongly consider the guidance of the CDC.

I would like to note that, being fully vaccinated, I will begin participating in gatherings and worship without a mask along with many members of Trinity. I also want each of you to know that I continue to support you all, whether you are struggling with whether to get the vaccine or are fully vaccinated, whether you are unsure of coming to worship quite yet or eager to get back, whether you are maintaining covid protocols for various reasons or had hoped to see them go long ago. As we each know very well, there are a variety of understandings in this conversation. Know that there is no thought or understanding that will keep me from praying for you, talking with you, working as best I can for you, and having my office door open to you for any conversation you would like to have. I pray that we may be one as God is one, that we may support each other

in our best attempts at life, and forgive one another in our weakest moments.

Should you have any questions or thoughts around this next stage of pandemic response, or would like to have a conversation for any other reason, know that my door is always open.

Peace,
Pastor Ben

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev. Ben Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Joining Sunday Worship Online:

To join at 9am for Sunday Morning Worship, you can use any computer, tablet, or smartphone with the link provided on our homepage at trinityarendtsville.org.

OR

Use the following steps for any type of phone (landline included):

1. Dial: 1 301 715 8592
2. When asked, enter the Meeting ID: 868 3849 4181
3. If asked, enter the passcode: 271040
4. To be able to speak, press *6.
5. To stop speaking, press *6 again.