



First United Methodist Church

135 West Simpson Street
Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania 17055
(717) 766-4611
www.fumchurch.com
office@fumchurch.com

May 19, 2021

Dear First Church Family,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Last Thursday announcements were made by the CDC, the President, and the Governor lifting mask restrictions outdoors and indoors for those who are fully vaccinated.

While these announcements are truly good news, they came suddenly and unexpectedly, putting businesses and institutions, including First Church, into the difficult position of needing to quickly re-evaluate our policies and protocols. While many in our church and community have been fully vaccinated, others, including children and youth under 16, have not been. As pastors, staff, and leaders, we are still committed to the health and safety of everyone, especially knowing that even though the numbers of positive cases are declining, the disease continues to spread.

From the onset of the pandemic, First Church has followed the guidelines issued by the CDC and the Governor. *As such, we have decided to lift our mask mandate for those who are fully vaccinated, and the following protocols will be in place in our church building **beginning Sunday, May 23:***

- We ask that all children over two years old, youth and those adults that are not vaccinated continue to wear masks, per the CDC guideline.
- We ask that you continue to sign in at the office anytime you enter the building, or sign in with a greeter on Sundays at our worship services (for contact tracing purposes).
- We will continue to create space to allow for physical distancing, such as roping off pews for Sunday morning worship.
- We will make the balcony seating area in the sanctuary available to those who prefer increased distancing space.
- We will continue to utilize the bipolar ionizers, which were installed into our HVAC system in the sanctuary and in the education wing, to provide clean air that has been purified from pathogens (such as Covid-19).

All ministries and programs of First Church will operate within these guidelines, and we will continue to evaluate how to best make our church building available to more ministries and groups moving forward. As we do this please remember that safety is our top priority, so you may be asked to continue wearing a mask in some specific situations where ministry occurs with those who are most vulnerable.

I ask that we respect everyone's decision, being sensitive, understanding and not judgmental toward individual choices and the ability/inability for some to be vaccinated. I also encourage you to participate in creating an environment in which everyone feels at ease to worship and grow in Christ together. Your kindness, understanding, and support over the next several weeks will be a blessing to us all.

I am so very grateful to our staff and lay leadership for their abiding input and support. Once again, we are navigating in uncharted waters. The good news is that the storm is passing and we serve a God who has been and will always be faithful!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Denny

Opening Doors with Christ, One Another and Our Neighbors