

To all of our Saint Stephens UCC members and friends:

We are aware of the newly released CDC guidelines for people who are FULLY VACCINATED concerning masks. Because we are not requiring vaccinations to attend worship and because we are not checking individuals' vaccination status, we are not changing our masking, distancing, or worship guidelines at this time.

Please still wear your masks. We have masks here in case you forget yours.

Please still use the pews that are open for seating and leave the roped off pews vacant to facilitate safe spacing.

Please still refrain from handshakes, hugs and physical contact with anyone who is not of your household or "Covid bubble."

When we go to one worship service on May 30 and if the Lincoln County "case burden" continues to decline, we will increase the attendance limit to 100 (50% of capacity or 100 whichever is lower).

For more information, feel free to check out the CDC large gathering guidelines at [CDC Large Gatherings](#).

And from the Wisconsin Council of Churches:

*Over one-third of Wisconsinites are fully vaccinated, but we invite you to be mindful of those who are not yet vaccinated or cannot be vaccinated. Consider that you may be in a mixed-vaccination-status group and provide a good role model for younger members and those who may need encouragement by wearing a mask where it is required and in large group settings.*

As it always is when it comes to following Jesus, it is not about you. It is about the person next to you or your neighbor a few pews away. Think of the person who longs to return to church, who cannot receive the vaccine and who cannot tell who is vaccinated and who is not.

We strive to create a safe space for all. To do so, we must consider the infection controls and the emotional safety of our fellow worshipers. At this time, the best thing we can all do to return to a greater sense of normal is to get vaccinated. When we reach that 70% benchmark, we can lose the masks and think about singing again.

In the meantime, we pray with confidence in the resiliency of the church and the love we have for one another.