



# Salem Scoop

## NOTES FROM NORM

*"I pray the Lord answers you whenever you are in trouble. Let the name of Jacob's God protect you. Let God send help to you from the sanctuary and support you from Zion." (Ps 20:1-2)*

I don't have to tell you that things are bad in Burke County. So let us begin with that scripture and prayer.

My goal is simply to keep you informed (not to add to your fears, but enlist your prayers and actions for one another).

At present, I'm aware of at least 8 persons from our congregation with the virus. None of these cases have been from attending SUMC. Some have had minor symptoms, others are more severe and on oxygen. One is presently hospitalized. Most have had a vaccine, but not all of them. Some have been named for prayer and others don't want it known. Zachary Cagle's uncle died in ICU Monday. We do know that our hospital is beyond capacity and understaffed.

All of this means that, regardless of vaccine status, we should still be cautious and caring. It means truly everyone is affected because if you have a heart attack or car accident now, you may have difficulties or delays in receiving care. Things are as bad or worse than they were earlier in Dec and Jan when we suspended in-person programs again at SUMC.

At this time, we are not pausing in-person programs largely because of 3 things.

- Unlike Jan, vaccines are now readily available to anyone over 12 years old
- Unlike Jan, air purification systems have been added in all of our buildings
- Unlike Jan, at least 70% of our congregation are vaccinated and those who have returned continue to be gracious about following our guidelines.

\*We want everyone to recognize that attending SUMC programs is not without risk but it is significantly reduced thanks to our guidelines and efforts. Please make the decisions you deem necessary for your safety. If our attendance drops significantly, we will consider pausing all in-person programming because it tells us the majority of folks do not feel safe at this time.

\*If you are attending Sunday School, worship, or another gathering during this time, please take seriously the need to stay home if you don't feel well and to wear a mask indoors. This is a gift to everyone. (Remember kids under 12 have no opportunity for vaccines and only 5% of those 12-17 in Burke have had a shot).

\*Visitation restrictions have returned. I have not done any general visitation since the pandemic began, only a crisis or emergency. Please do look of needs or surgeries, but I will not be doing hospital or home visits at this time. We will try to spread prayer requests by email and announcements.

\*Additionally, we are offering another vaccine clinic at SUMC on Wednesday Sept 1, 8:30-9:30am. If you know anyone who needs a vaccine please invite them. Walk-ins welcome and there is no cost.

Thank you for continuing to do your part to offer love and care to our neighbors. We are not out of the woods, but neither are we alone.

God with us!

## C-19 Guidelines :

**-If you feel sick OR experience any symptoms related to C-19, please do not attend!**

- Masks must be worn during any indoor programs.
- Consider stepping outside for extended conversations or greeting.
- You may place your offering at the altar before/during/after service

### Other procedures:

- New purification system has been installed in all buildings.
- Our building is cleaned weekly by Mobile Services
- We will spray to disinfect before worship.
- Nursery is open for family use, but not staffed.
- Assume everyone wants to maintain safe distance unless given permission.



**Thank you for your help and patience as we navigate new territory together!**