

## COVID SAFETY GUIDELINES from Father Andrew

Dear siblings in Christ,

The vestry, parish nurse, and I met on August 10th. We talked about the most recent surge of the COVID Delta variant that is currently ripping through Southern states and rising in Virginia. As we can see, cases in Virginia and Henrico County are rising sharply, and the transmission rate is high. There is a dramatic difference between States with high vaccination rates and those with low vaccination rates. We are witnessing hospital systems pushed to the limit. The risk is that these health care systems will be unable to give adequate treatment to any patients, not just those with COVID. Most new cases of the Delta variant are occurring in unvaccinated people. There are some breakthrough cases of fully vaccinated people. They often have no symptoms, which makes them even more at risk of unknowingly spreading the virus.

Following recent CDC guidelines and guidance from the Bishop:

- We kindly request that while in the building, you please wear a mask.

We encourage everyone to be mindful and consider taking some social distancing steps:

- Sitting with a more even distribution throughout the pews.
- Use discretion when shaking hands or hugging.

We do not intend these steps to be the first in returning to outdoor worship or going completely virtual. We are committed to maintaining in-person worship, as long as not otherwise directed by the Bishop or Governor.

At each vestry meeting moving forward, we will review all pertinent data, current guidelines, and the state of our community. We will continue to adjust our safety measures accordingly, always striving to keep us able to meet together as safely as possible.

As it has been since the start of this pandemic, these actions we take are not done solely to protect ourselves or any one individual. We do them to protect everyone, the whole community, especially the unvaccinated and those most vulnerable. The simple act of wearing a mask can have a profound impact; it could save a life.

If you are not vaccinated yet and are eligible, please talk to your health care provider about its safety and effectiveness in keeping people from getting severely ill. I am always available to talk and pray about this choice as well. Presiding Bishop Curry reminds us, "We who can receive the COVID-19 vaccine are being asked not just to protect ourselves, but also to protect children."

If you have any questions or comments, you can always speak with me, a vestry member, or Crystal our Parish Nurse.

Faithfully,

Andrew+