

To all in the Trinity community:

It has been an incredibly long year and a half. None of us had any idea we'd be away from corporate worship - in person - for this long. The COVID Task Force has worked tirelessly to assess data, strategize about mitigation for safety, help us figure out how to be together safely, and offer opportunities to gather safely in the interim, too!

We are looking forward to Sunday, September 12, as our new beginning at the church house. Thanks to the generosity of your financial gifts and stewardship, we've been able to purchase the needed equipment to make this transition, and thanks to the incredible generosity of Joe Hinshaw, the tech team, and others who have given their time and labor, it has all been installed and is ready to go - with some ongoing tweaking and fine tuning.

As with everything else in society, we're not talking about going back to normal, but instead how we can gather together safely, especially considering the Delta variant and other variants on the horizon. First and foremost, the most important thing each of us can do individually to care for the collective is to get vaccinated! I am grateful to know our vaccination rate for eligible individuals within the congregation is around 100%. Boosters will be coming for many of us soon, and all of us eventually, and as a parent of children who still can't be vaccinated, I join many in praying for the swift approval of a vaccine for our younger disciples.

Because there are still some in our church family who cannot be vaccinated, and others for whom vaccination provides less protection because of other health

concerns, we had already determined that when we came back together, we'd be doing so requiring masks for all people over the age of 2, regardless of vaccine status. Since that decision was made, the Delta variant and current surge has reinforced the wisdom of that choice. If you plan to join in person for worship, we appreciate your cooperation in remaining fully masked while inside. It's also a sign of hospitality and welcome for anyone entering the worship space - we mask because we care.

If you had been in worship prior to COVID, you know that we have been packed pretty tightly in the sanctuary for a while now. That just isn't safe to do so right now, and as a result, we're going to have to set up in ways that provide space between chairs and more space between the worship leaders and the congregation, since we lead worship unmasked for clarity. That means that when we come back, we will initially have just 50 spots open each week, to be reserved online or by calling the church office. Half of those will be in the Commons, where what you've been seeing on the livestream will be broadcast on the large TV in there. The other half will be in the sanctuary. If you don't want to be on camera in the livestream, the best bet is to sit in the Commons, where there are no cameras. In the sanctuary, there will always be a chance that you will be on screen, and therefore on the video of the worship service after it is over. We will have a waiver for caregivers of minors to sign giving permission to record if they will be sitting in the sanctuary.

We know that some of you will prefer to continue watching from home, either at 10am on Facebook, or after worship once the video is available for viewing. We also

imagine that there will be at least 50 each week who want to participate, so we're asking for your cooperation in helping to ensure that everyone who wants to participate in worship in person is able to do so, at least on a monthly basis. The signup for each Sunday will generally go "live" 2 weeks before the service. If you are signed up for one week, we would encourage you to wait to sign up for the following week, to allow others who weren't able to get a spot the first opportunity to sign up. So, for example, if the signup for September 12 goes live on Monday, August 30, you can sign up then or anytime up to the service, as long as there are spots available. On Monday, September 6 the signup for September 19 will go live. If you have already secured a spot for September 12, consider waiting until September 13 to sign up for September 19. To sign up online, go to <https://rsvp.church/r/EwBXf80f>. This link will not change. You may also call the church office to be added to the list.

Similarly, we invite you to alternate your signup between the Commons and the Sanctuary, to allow more people the opportunity to worship in the Sanctuary over the course of time. If you'd prefer to sit in the Commons, that's fine! But if you sit in the Sanctuary one week, do consider signing up for the Commons the following week.

We will go with these plans and numbers through September, and the COVID Task Force will continue to evaluate the situation with COVID and community transmission to make any adjustments needed. We look forward to the day when we can be back together, without masks, and in greater numbers, but we aren't there yet.

One blessing in all of this time has been watching our community grow - not only with new members in our physical midst, but with others who have been joining us from homes across the country and around the globe. We know that for some, because of distance or schedule or some other reason, online worship is what makes it possible to join with the community. As we move forward, we are going to be intentional about how we are a hybrid church. Though we will worship - and participate in other areas of the church's ministry - from different places, we are all one body. You can help build that hybrid community by reaching out to visitors online, participating in the Trinity Facebook group, if you are on facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/205234554129577>), and continuing to participate occasionally from home.

We are looking forward to this new beginning, and grateful for all that God has done and is continuing to do through the ministry of Trinity.

Grace and Peace,

The COVID Task Force:

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