

Updated February 21, 2022

Dear Bethel,

The COVID task force met over the weekend. Bethel will continue to follow the Northfield School District and CDC recommendations. With the COVID numbers declining after the Omicron surge, the Northfield School District will move to masks recommended, not required beginning tomorrow, Tuesday, February 22, 2022. As with all things during the pandemic, this will be a fluid process. If COVID numbers keep declining, we hope to ratchet further down. Likewise, we will be responsive if the numbers start climbing again. Here's how things will look at Bethel beginning Tuesday, February 22:

- Masks will be recommended, but not required, for most activities within the church.
- Until further notice: **the 8:30 a.m. service will be masks recommended and 10:45 a.m. will be masks required.** This allows congregants to have a choice depending upon their comfort level/health concerns/small children/etc.
- Worshipers will use their judgement on masking while singing based on which service they attend and personal risk concerns.
- Choir will be asked to continue to wear masks until further notice.
- Bethel leaders are urged to model behavior by wearing masks outside of individual offices.
- N95 masks are encouraged as the best solution to maximize personal safety as well as the safety of those around us.
- Nursery staff and children will continue to require masks as this is an unvaccinated group.
- Fellowship hour will remain on Sundays.
- We will proceed with soup suppers for Lent on Wednesdays at 5:45 p.m.
- Conversation about moving toward traditional Communion at the altar is happening as people feel comfortable. Stay tuned.

And, of course...

- If you are ill or have been in contact with someone who is quarantining or has tested positive for COVID 19, please stay home.
- In-person worship is still deemed high risk by the CDC for those who are unvaccinated and/or members of vulnerable populations.

We realized this is a trade-off. Some folks may elect to participate less because they don't support masks recommended. Others may rejoin programming once they feel the restrictions are lifted. We can't please everyone, but we are trying to make good choices while keeping our Bethel family safe.

Thank you, Bethel, for continuing to show love and grace as we walk forward together.