

## Report from the Building Re-Opening Task Force

June 2021

### Current Statistics:

As of June 13 2021, the 7-day average of new cases in Philadelphia County is 3.3 per 100,000 (Source: Johns Hopkins COVID-19 website). This number has remained between 3.3 and 3.8 for the previous week. The City of Philadelphia reported that as of June 7 2021, 52% of residents are fully vaccinated with an additional 15% partially vaccinated.

### Recommendation:

Based on the current regional COVID-19 statistics, the Building Re-Opening Task Force recommends the following restrictions for the initial in-person service at First Church:

#### **A. Initial In-Person Service:**

- Masks expected to be worn by all
  - Can be removed by worship leaders (*at their discretion*), including the choir, when actively leading the service
  - Expectation to be broadly communicated
    - *Rationale for mask expectation:*
      - Permits congregation singing with limited risk
      - Allows for limited air movement safety (hand fans for relief from heat) with minimal increase in risk
      - Vaccinated but immunocompromised individuals may have limited COVID-19 resistance
      - Unvaccinated congregants likely to be in attendance
- Pre-registration required
  - Attendees checked off list when entering
  - Allow for additional 10% walk-ins
    - *Rationale for pre-registration:*
      - Allows Sunday service planning (i.e. if multiple services required)
      - Facilitates attendance scheduling if multiple services are required
      - Contact tracing if a positive COVID-19 attendee is subsequently identified
- Spacing of congregants
  - At least 6' spacing between family units
  - Maximum number of family units at this spacing still to be finalized (*previous number (33) was based on ~10' spacing*)
    - *Rationale for spacing:*
      - Known poor ventilation issues in sanctuary
      - Unidentified unvaccinated attendees may be interspersed, and spacing provides safety
      - 6' (vs 10') spacing consistent with CDC recommendations and mask use expectation

## B. Future Restriction Relaxation:

- When the 7-day average of new cases per 100,000 people in Philadelphia County drops below **two** (2/100,000):
  - Mask use encouraged
  - Pre-registration required<sup>1</sup>
  - Maintain social distancing
- When the 7-day average of new cases per 100,000 people in Philadelphia County drops below **one** (1/100,000 - i.e. the level that authorities consider "low risk"):
  - Services return to pre-covid "normal"
  - Includes: Masks solely at individuals' discretion, no distancing requirement, no pre-registration

## C. Potential Future Restriction Reintroduction:

With COVID-19, nothing is certain. It is possible that case numbers could increase at some point in the future.

While there is no simple statistic that indicates the level of risk of COVID-19 transmission, the statistic that the task force has focused on has been the 7-day average of the new cases per 100,000 people in Philadelphia County. This statistic is readily available and is an overall indicator of the combined impact of such things as variants, vaccination levels, and, community restrictions on COVID-19 transmission. Risk is not directly related to this statistic, but, is believed to be exponentially related. It is also commonly accepted that a doubling of risk warrants a review of restrictions. As such, the task force recommends:

- If "normal" services have returned (i.e. the new case 7-day average has dropped below 1/100,000), and **then** the new case 7-day average increases above **2/100,000**, social distancing and mask use encouragement should be reintroduced.
- If intermediate restriction services are in place (i.e. the numbers are between 2/100,000 and 1/100,000), and **then** the new case 7-day average increases above **3/100,000**, restrictions for the initial service (as listed above, i.e. expect mask use, pre-registration, social distancing) should be reintroduced.

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<sup>1</sup> per proposed amendment 6/30/21