

MPC Coronavirus Policy Update Effective Friday, June 25, 2021

A group of church members, who were invited by the session to offer guidance and advice regarding Covid-19 policy and precautions, met via Zoom on Tuesday evening, June 22. Based on the panel's recommendations, the session approved the following motion as an update to our health and safety policy in regard to Covid.

1. Immediately update our current policy to allow for in-person gatherings, under the following guidelines:

Church events may now be held in person, observing safety procedures such as:

- provision of PPE such as masks and hand sanitizer, and meeting areas to have been cleaned and sanitized thoroughly as of the start of the event
- allotment of adequate space for reasonable distancing; family groups and "pods" may be seated together
- appropriate ventilation is required
- vocalized congregational responses including congregational singing kept to a minimum
- discouragement of physical contact such as hugs and handshakes
- encouragement of those who are experiencing symptoms, or who have recently been in contact with Covid patients, to stay home until symptoms have had a chance to recede
- indoor events to be designed generally for shorter duration
- dining events will not be held indoors; outdoor dining events are not encouraged, as the logistics tend to exclude those with mobility and other issues, but if held, participants are to bring their own provisions

2. Invite all members of the extended church family to inform the pastor as to whether they have been vaccinated, emphasizing that the reason for gathering this information, all of which will be kept private, is simply to help the session make decisions about worship and other in-person events.

3. Committees and small groups with 100% vaccination rates may gather indoors or outdoors, with masks optional once in the designated meeting space.

4. Those who are not vaccinated are requested to observe health and safety practices such as masking, distancing, and refraining from physical contact.

5. Publicize vigorously that, by and large, we will be carrying forward patterns and practices being implemented by the MRA, during the summer as well as when we begin fall schedules. As such, protocols are subject to being updated in accordance with changing circumstances.

6. Where and when feasible, provide virtual/online alternatives.

7. Provide information on safety measures in advance of public events, rather than relying on people finding out when they arrive.

8. Consider appointing a “Covid point person” to help oversee the implementation of safety measures and/or whatever pertinent roles the session might envision.

The church staff would make prudent decisions about opening hours for the office, which, technically, has been closed since March 2020.