

It has been a year since we first asked you to suspend worship due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, you have been doing the work of innovation and providing virtual and safe in-person gatherings. We continue to applaud your efforts to provide ministry online and to safely return to in-person activity using the guidelines we have created after discernment with your church leadership. We know every context is different. We continue to promote shared leadership among clergy and laity as you continue to reach the needs of your community.

We know there will come a day when the CDC will make changes in their recommendations for indoor gatherings. Vaccine distribution has increased and positive cases have decreased. The light at the end of this tunnel is getting brighter. Thanks be to God!

We will continue to monitor the latest guidance from the CDC. For now, we ask you to continue to practice these essential guidelines:

1. At all times persons must **maintain at least six feet of distance** between family groups.
2. **Masks or cloth face coverings are required** when any group gathers (except for children under the age of 2).
3. **Monitor your symptoms.** Stay home if you are sick or displaying COVID-19 symptoms. Those who have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive should adhere to the CDC guidelines for isolation and quarantine.
4. All inside activities must be in **well ventilated spaces** that allow for persons to maintain at least six feet of distance between family groups. **Outside activities are preferred over inside activities.**

Our COVID-19 safety [protocols](#) and [guidelines](#) are connected to the ongoing guidance and recommendations from the [Florida Department of Health](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control](#). Although they have updated their guidance related to persons who have received the vaccine and for schools, their guidance for gatherings related to churches remains the same. Without knowing the vaccination status of all parishioners, continuing the aforementioned protocols will be the most responsible action.

We encourage local churches to continue the offering of online worship. We pray for patience as some persons return to in-person worship, while others await the vaccine.

We know some of you are beginning to plan summer activities for children and youth. We are pleased that we will be able to host summer camp at Warren Willis Camp this summer as they follow the strict guidance from the American Camping Association. Information about the Warren Willis Camp guidelines can be found [here](#) and you can

register [here](#). Your church should plan to follow similar guidelines as you plan your summer.

All of our previous [updates](#) and resources are found on our [COVID-19 website and in our FAQ section](#). If you have questions or we can help interpret these guidelines, please reach out to your District Superintendent or contact the Episcopal Office at [ashanks@flumc.org](mailto:ashanks@flumc.org).

We appreciate your perseverance. We are a people of hope who continue to press on as we remain On Mission Together.

The Peace of the Lord,  
Bishop Ken Carter and The Cabinet of The Florida Annual Conference