



Westminster Presbyterian Church

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Rev. Jamie Milton, Head Pastor

March 16, 2022

Greetings, Westminster family!

The Session continues to be grateful for your patience and prayers as we have carefully considered the guidance, recommendations, and data from health officials regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. We have tried to base our decisions on the best available information regarding the virus and how it is spread. Over the last two years as scientists and medical professionals have learned more about COVID, as testing has become more easily accessible, and as an effective vaccine has been made available to most age groups, recommendations and precautions have changed, and we have adapted as necessary.

Since the Session last acted regarding Westminster's COVID precautions we have seen an unprecedented surge in the number of COVID cases, followed by the subsequent drop in infections and community spread. All of this happened over the course of about three months. At that time, precautions in place at Westminster depended upon the percentage of positive COVID tests in Bay County. Following those guidelines, the only remaining precaution in place is the request that masks be worn when in the building. Most of our other church activities have already resumed.

Since that decision, the Center for Disease Control and state and local health departments have revised their own guidance regarding precautions and masking. At the beginning of March, the CDC published a tool on their website that gives local communities guidance on precautions based on positive cases, positivity rates, and hospital occupancy rates, among other things. You can enter our county here and see the current risk level for our area along with the CDC's recommendations for each level. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/community-levels.html>

Effective immediately, the Session will use this guidance to determine what, if any, precautions are recommended for the health of our congregation as we meet together for worship, fellowship, study, and prayer. Following these guidelines, **masks are optional while at Westminster**, as long as the risk level remains at low or medium. Should there be another spike in local COVID cases, this could change, but we are thankful that the daily average of cases is currently very low. We will update our website and social media page, and post signs at church, if there are any changes.

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We believe that the precautions we have followed have helped us to love our neighbors and keep our community safe. We will continue to offer worship in-person and online and will continue to make as many of our activities accessible virtually for those more cautious, more vulnerable or in high-risk categories. Thank you for your continued prayers and support. Please reach out to one of your Session members if you have any questions.

With Christ's love,

The Session of Westminster Presbyterian Church

*Westminster is here to serve God and humanity sharing the love of Jesus
through Faith, Hope, and Love with an open and genuine spirit.*