



## Covid- 19 FAQ Sheet – Updated August 16, 2021

Due to the changing nature of Covid-19 and the Delta Variant, the Covid Task Team has summarized some commonly asked questions and new guidelines.

We live in a precarious time where a mix of vaccinated and unvaccinated persons create a high risk of a COVID strain developing that is resistant to all vaccines, which means the pandemic could start all over again with another year or more of not being able to gather as a congregation. This adds to the urgency to get more people vaccinated.

### What is the current Centers for Disease Control (CDC) mask guideline?

As of July 27, 2021, the CDC states that those fully vaccinated can “participate in many of the activities that you did before the pandemic”, **unless there are local rules that require a different mandate.**

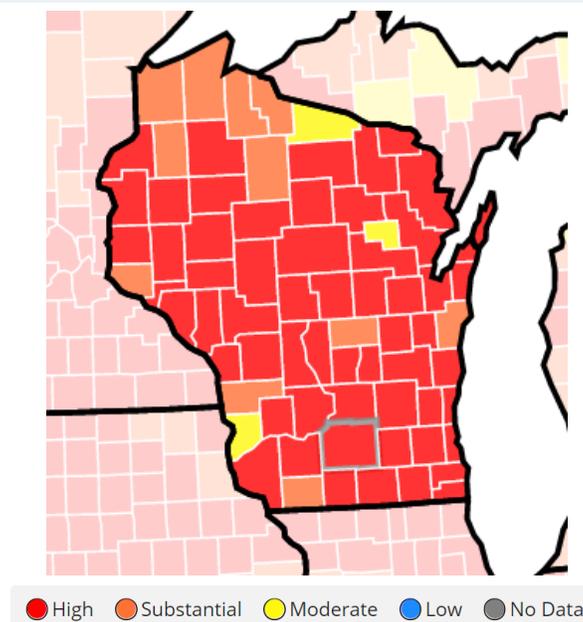
Masks are not required for those fully vaccinated if you live in an area of **Low or Moderate** Covid-19 transmission.

In areas with **Substantial or High** transmission, the CDC recommends masks be worn in indoor, public places regardless of vaccination status.

Currently most of Wisconsin is in the High category, therefore the Conference strongly urges people to wear a mask indoors regardless of vaccination status.

Below is the transmission level for each county in Wisconsin as well as a link where you can check this at any time. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>

Time Period: Sun Aug 08 2021 - Sat Aug 14 2021



**Due to recent trends, the Wisconsin Conference Covid-19 Task Team recommends the following:**

**For those not yet having In-Person Worship, please delay the start of this for the present.**

**For those having In-Person Worship, encourage your congregation to:**

- Get vaccinated
- Enjoy virtual worship if not fully vaccinated
- Strongly recommend all clergy to become fully vaccinated before they continue to deliver sermons to their congregation



**Can we have paper bulletins, and can we use the hymnals and Bibles in the pews?**

These are all permitted at the current time. Any transmission risk from this is considered low.

**What about Children's and Youth Sunday School and adult education?**

These may resume with caution. Remember that children under 12 are not yet eligible for any vaccine, so they should continue to wear a mask unless they are all from the same family. Our task team strongly recommends that those teaching and caring for children be fully vaccinated. Adult education can resume with full activities as described above under the CDC mask guideline section.

**How do we handle child/nurse care?**

Children under two are not recommended to wear a mask. All other recommendations are the same as under the education section above. It is imperative that anyone caring for children be fully vaccinated.

**Will there be a social time with food? Is it okay to still give children snacks?**

This is permitted. Our task team recommends that the snacks and food be prepared by someone fully vaccinated as well as served by someone fully vaccinated. At this point it is time we recommend avoiding self-service for food, snacks, and beverages.

**Will the bathrooms be available?**

Bathrooms can be fully available with no restrictions other than the masking recommendations stated above.

**How do we celebrate baptism and Holy Communion?**

If all adults and children 12 and over are fully immunized, then this can be done but all should be masked, except those less than two years old.

The Task Team recommends that communion be served by those fully vaccinated, and that self-service be avoided unless it is known that all receiving communion are fully vaccinated. If that is the case, then this can be done in any way that has been used in the past with the addition of all persons masking.

**Will we be able to sing? Will there be live music?**

Singing is currently permitted following the mask guidance described above. Everyone should wear a mask, and those not vaccinated should additionally physically distance at all times while in church.

Live music is also permitted following the restrictions already described.

**How do we collect an offering?**

At the present time we recommend you do not pass the offering plate among the congregation. Offerings can be given online, by mail, or by leaving an offering plate(s) at the rear of the sanctuary for people as they leave service. There are other ways you can collect the offering, but the goal is that it is done individually rather than passing the plate among the congregation.

**How will you inform your Congregation as to what you plan to do?**

Informing the congregation is critical. This can be done using letters, email, web sites, social media, or other ways that are normally used to communicate with the congregation.

**What about COVID variants like Delta and breakthrough infections?**

Public Health has reported that 81% of infections in Dane County now appear to be from the Delta Variant. The current mRNA vaccines available in the US are all effective against the variants. In Dane County, during the first 6 months of 2021, the risk of infection was about 15-times higher for those not vaccinated when compared to those vaccinated when infection rates are high. Importantly, the rate of 'breakthrough infections' (COVID-19 infections in those fully vaccinated) was decreasing over time after vaccination, which is also very encouraging. The bottom line is that the vaccines available in the USA are safe and effective.

**Resources:**

<https://www.vaccines.gov/search/>

<https://www.wichurches.org/2021/07/28/by-faith-we-stand-firm/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html#vaccinated>