

As we have hoped, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued guidance for those who have been fully vaccinated. This refers to those who are two weeks past their second shot for Pfizer and Moderna vaccines and two weeks past receiving the single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

You can read the complete information here:

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

“Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.”

-Philippians 2:4

What does this mean for our worship?

For now, it means no changes to worship. We always hope our worship will not be limited to those who are currently eligible to receive the vaccine. Limiting worship only to those who have been vaccinated is not in keeping with our understanding of the Body of Christ being made up of people of every age and stage in life. Furthermore, our guidance permits 50 persons indoors and 75 persons outdoors. And even under the new CDC guidance, all worship services would still qualify as gatherings that require everyone in worship to wear a mask, and stay at least 6 feet apart from those who are not in your household.

What does this mean for small groups?

By our existing guidance, small groups, including vestries and Bible studies, may meet. Given this new information from the CDC, if those groups learn that *everyone* is more than two weeks past their final dose, not wearing masks is now possible. However, we cannot assume that because most of the people in a group have received vaccines that everyone has done so.

What does this mean for recording worship?

A recording team composed of persons who are all two weeks past their final dose of the vaccine do not have to wear masks when recording.

What about singing?

In following the CDC guidance, fully vaccinated singers can sing together, but if they are in a worship service (rather than recording or rehearsing with no congregation present), they must be masked. We always need to be ready to welcome anyone to worship, including those not yet able to receive a vaccination.

What about time limits?

If a group determines that everyone present is two weeks past their final dose of the vaccine, they may meet in person for any length of time, indoors or outdoors.

When will we see further changes?

The Diocese of Georgia will update its guidance to adjust to CDC recommendations as they are released. We now know that COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing severe illness and death as well as limiting community spread of the virus. Public health experts are still learning how effective the vaccines are against variants of the virus that causes COVID-19. Early data show the vaccines may work against some variants but could be less effective against others. As they know more, CDC will continue to update their recommendations for both vaccinated and unvaccinated people. The Diocese of Georgia will monitor these changes and adjust our guidance when possible to reflect the latest data.

Most important for all of the above

We would never want to shame or exclude anyone who can not yet receive the vaccine, including many of our deacons and priests. We anticipate that eligibility and opportunity to receive the vaccine will expand in the coming weeks, but in the meantime continuing patience is essential.