

policy as proposed on 03/20/22

Bethel Church COVID-19 Policy

This policy reflects the changing status of the COVID virus within our community including developing CDC guidelines.

The COVID virus has been recognised as no longer an uncontrolled PANDEMIC in many areas of our country, becoming a controllable, though still deadly, Endemic infectious disease. While a vaccination regimen remains the most effective measure for controlling the disease, the increasing level of acquired immunity in the general population has resulted in a significantly reduced incidence of severe cases and rate of transmission in many areas. In areas where the rate of transmission is considered low, the wearing of masks indoors is no longer considered necessary for those without medical conditions that inhibit their immune system.

In consideration of the above, and while Leon County's rate of transmission is rated low, Bethel's COVID policy has been revised as follows:

- We will continue providing both in-person worship at the church as well as an on-line service from the Service page of Bethel's web site (www.bethelumctlh.org)
- We ask that if you or anyone in your household is sick, please stay home and participate in our on-line service
- For those whose immune system may be compromised or who have other reasons for additional caution, the wearing of a mask is encouraged and one may be provided on request. Any individual or group may request to be "socially distanced" when being seated .
- Stationary offering plates will be located in the narthex
- Communion will be observed on the first Sunday of each month in both church and online services. Traditional elements of bread and juice will be offered at the altar and individually pre-packaged communion cups with wafer enclosed will be available in the narthex for pick up when entering. Communion may be taken at the altar or in the pew.
- Hand sanitizer is provided at the entrance and in restrooms

After the CDC announced additional cautions in August 2021, the FLA Conference of the UMC issued the following statement:

"We urge the use of masks in indoor settings, as an expression of our love for our neighbor and as the fulfillment of the law of Christ . (Galatians 5:14)"

Galatians 5:14: *For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'.*