Holding Our Plans Loosely
Returning to Church 2.0
Context

Social & Political Crises
Zoom Fatigue
Mental/Emotional Health
Fiscal Health
Pressure from Parishioners
Neighboring Churches
Internal Pressure

Continuing Pandemic
Evolving Science
Vaccine Development
New COVID Variants
Politicization of COVID
What will we prioritize?

**Life and Health of Neighbor**
- Creativity in ministry (holy experiments)
- Urgency and care in meeting human needs
- Diversity and accessibility
- Church’s role as community leader
- Trust in the resilience of the church
The Fruit of the Spirit

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.

— Galatians 5:22-23 (NRSV)

- When can we return...
- How shall we return...
- Who can we trust?
- What is the best way to manage things until then?
- And then what?
Returning to Church: Hastening the Day

1. Encourage vaccination
2. Maintain the expectation of individual & community COVID protections until
   • The majority of the population is vaccinated
   • Rates of viral transmission decline substantially
Two-Step Approach

Watch for Vaccination Rates
50-75%

Then track
• COVID cases/100K
• Positive COVID tests
### When is it safe(r) to gather?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNSAFE</th>
<th>MAKE IT SAFER</th>
<th>SAFEST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaccination &lt;50%</td>
<td>Vaccination 50-70%+</td>
<td>Vaccination 70-85%+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viral Transmission</td>
<td>Viral Transmission</td>
<td>Viral Transmission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases &gt;10/100K Positive Tests &gt;10%</td>
<td>Cases 5-10/100K Positive Tests &lt;10%</td>
<td>Cases &lt;1/100K Positive Tests &lt;5%</td>
</tr>
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<th>CASES</th>
<th>POSITIVE TESTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;50%</td>
<td>Cases &gt;10/100K</td>
<td>Positive Tests &gt;10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where can I find solid data?

- Statewide for Wisconsin on wichurches.org (updated 2x/month)
- County-Specific:
  - DHS-WI  [https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/data.htm#summary](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/data.htm#summary)
  - GlobalEpidemics.org  [https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/](https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/)
How shall we return?

• Not until vaccination rates are well over 50%
• Not until viral transmission in community is very low
• Expect a long time of precautions following return

• Use a combination of
  Best mitigations you can agree upon
  Hybrid ministry options

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## Safer Choices

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All at once</td>
<td>Face masks mandatory</td>
<td>“Make it safer” list + no/minimized singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmasked</td>
<td>Physical distancing</td>
<td>Hybrid, phased plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No distance</td>
<td>Low-touch environment</td>
<td>Wait 1 month+ between phases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full capacity</td>
<td>Outdoors/air exchange</td>
<td>Fallback plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assembly singing</td>
<td>Shortened time</td>
<td>Communication plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating Together</td>
<td>Singing-worship leaders only</td>
<td>Team responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sanitize high-touch surfaces</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sign-in/attendance list</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Vaccines are important AND

• Not a free pass
• Even the best not 100% effective
• Asymptomatic infections
• Not everyone will take vaccine

Keep up precautions until dramatic reduction in viral transmission in the community
**But what about...**

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<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>Unmasked Assembly</td>
<td>Mask, Distance 6-10 ft+ Outdoors, Leader only</td>
<td>One of the last things to reintroduce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eucharist</td>
<td>Unmasked Tear bread</td>
<td>Distanced lines, masks, Celebrant sanitizes well, Host or pre-cut, individual cups placed</td>
<td>Pre-packaged Pre-positioned Spiritual communion</td>
</tr>
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<td>Eating Meals Together</td>
<td>Indoors, Buffet</td>
<td>Distribute outdoors, pre-assembled, to-go</td>
<td>Pre-packaged Home delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alternative activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home &amp; Care Facility Visits</td>
<td>Unmasked</td>
<td>Mask &amp; Face shield, sanitize hands, limit 1/day, change clothes after visit</td>
<td>Telephone, video, front porch visits, mail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Frequently Asked Questions

- Signage for awareness vs. liability waivers
- Building use: same policies, limited use, responsibility for space
- Vaccination: educate, advocate, encourage not require
- Employment: reasonable accommodations
- Policy: be clear, consistent, “reasonable person”
- Consult attorney, insurance agent, judicatory leader!
Making Healthy Decisions

1. Commit to a guiding authority
2. Choose a risk level, risk budget
3. Pick a statistical source and stick with it
4. Establish a phasing plan – what and when
5. Hold each phase for at least 4 weeks
6. Have a fallback plan
7. Have an outbreak plan
8. Learn & use depolarizing skills
9. Model Holy Imagination
Resources

PDF & slides will be emailed
Recording [youtube.com/wisconsincouncilofchurches](https://youtube.com/wisconsincouncilofchurches)

**PDF includes**

- Full text of recommendations
- Links to statistical sites
- Links to other helpful information resources
- Links to webinars, videos, etc.
- Link to WCC’s coronavirus index
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