

MEMORANDUM FROM JKP LEAD TEAM

Lenten blessings to all. In recent days a feeling of relief seems to be growing in our nation as three vaccines have now been approved and millions of persons around the country have gotten one, and in some cases both shots for the Covid 19 vaccination. That sense of relief has also led to a wide range of actions and discussions. Some states have dropped their mask mandates in public areas. Others have allowed for larger participation in areas such as public gatherings or capacities for restaurants or bars, all while public health officials are urging caution in plans for opening up. Many of our sessions in JKP are having new discussions about worship and fellowship activities in our church buildings.

Your JKP Lead Team has offered advice and resources over the last months and we want to continue to offer food for thought as these discussions begin. First of all, we want to commend all our Sessions for the care you have taken in making decisions for your congregation. Because of your diligence none of our churches has endured a major outbreak of Covid.

We remind you that these decisions are made by each Session for their individual congregation. What we offer is well-intended advice. We urge you to continue using caution in your discernment. While the numbers of infections and deaths are trending down, current numbers were considered quite high just a few months ago and are still considered too high to drop standard safeguards. Despite the uptick in vaccinations experts warn that we are still months away from “herd immunity.” Finally, we remind you of a resource that first came out about six weeks ago. The good people of the Wisconsin Council of Churches released “Holding Our Plans Loosely: Returning to Church 2.0” This document shares guidelines that spell out degrees of safety based on criteria such as local vaccination/infection rates, and what is advisable to do or avoid. The link for this resource can be found on the homepage of the JKP Website, www.jknox.org. We encourage you to read through both the Executive summary and the full document to aid in your discussions and decisions.

Thank you all for your faithful diligence in this difficult time and may God continue to bless our church and our nation as we move toward a joyous Easter and beyond.

The John Knox Lead Team