ECC COVID-19 Update
12/22/2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As many of you are aware, the Omicron variant of COVID-19 has been shown to be much more contagious than what we have experienced so far in the pandemic, and cases of Omicron are rapidly rising in King County. It has also shown to cause significantly more breakthrough Omicron infections in people who have received two doses of Pfizer or Moderna or a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine. Consider getting another dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine for your protection. For those who were vaccinated with the J&J vaccine, it is recommended to schedule a Moderna or Pfizer vaccine booster shot. Recently, the CDC has recommended that people should not get the J&J COVID-19 vaccine citing rare incidents of safety concerns. Getting a **booster** appears to help improve the vaccine effectiveness against Omicron. Some scientists are hopeful Omicron may not lead to as severe disease progression such as hospitalizations and death. As of today, the infection rate has gone up but the hospitalization rate, which is a measure of severity, in King County (and worldwide) has not increased significantly. We will share more information as they become available.

Because of our concern for the wellbeing of our church family, especially those who are at higher risk for serious infection, while balancing out the spiritual needs of our members, we recommend the following changes to current guidelines:

- Those at higher risk for serious infection (the elderly, those with compromised immune systems, and those with risk factors for serious infection) should receive a booster (and wait 2 weeks) as soon as you are able. Consider not coming in person and instead worshipping through our livestream services, depending on your own personal level of risk.
- We strongly encourage everyone who is eligible to receive a booster of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Those serving in children and youth ministry: we recommend all staff, teachers, and volunteers to get the booster shot, for your own sake and the sake of our children. Thank you for your dedication and your service to our young ones!
- Children should leave the church facilities (indoors), as soon as classes are over and should not remain to mingle.
- People should remain masked while indoors at all times. Therefore, no refreshments (food or drink) should be served at any ECC activities indoors, including small groups and fellowships, except for Communion. You are welcome to have refreshments outdoors as this is lower risk.
- Consider COVID-19 testing before gathering with others, especially with those who are at higher risk.

We recognize that this is a very fluid situation. We will continue to monitor the pandemic closely, follow official public health guidelines, and stand ready to modify our recommendations as things change. We humbly ask for your prayers for wisdom as these are not easy decisions, as we look after the physical and spiritual welfare of our church family. Please also pray for protection for ECC and for our sisters and brothers in Christ in the greater church family throughout the world.

May God bless you and keep you,
ECC COVID-19 Taskforce and Executive Committee