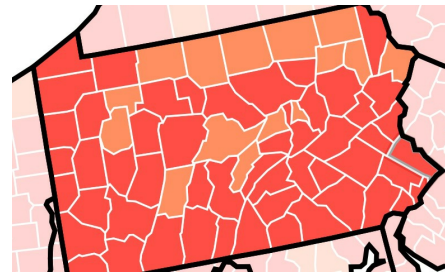


COVID Updates From Dr. Babinchak



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Dr. Tim Babinchak, an expert in infectious diseases, advises congregations to continue with the precautions of wearing masks, maintaining social distancing, cleaning, and increasing ventilation as they continue with indoor worship services and other activities.



Dr. Babinchak, a member of St. John's Lutheran Church, Phoenixville, is retired head of infectious diseases at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.

Here are takeaways from his presentation to SEPA leaders August 26:

- COVID is NOT going away. We are learning to live with it.
- Today's vaccines do not prevent **infection**. They are very good at preventing **serious illness, hospitalization, and death**.
- The precautions we became familiar with before May's temporary easing of protocols, are still effective: **Wearing masks, maintaining physical distancing, cleaning high-touch and high-traffic areas with soap or ethanol.**
- **Cloth masks are effective** during short duration events less than one hour, such as worship.
- If possible, **six feet of distance** should be maintained between people from different family units.
- **Ventilation is key.** Open windows and/or have an expert ensure your HVAC system allows sufficient air exchange.

- **Protocols must be maintained now** because the Delta variant spreads more easily than the original strain of the virus.
- **90 percent** of rise in cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are among **unvaccinated** persons.
- Vaccinated people can be infected and **transmit the virus** without showing any symptoms.
- Precautions will be needed until school-age children, ages 5-12, can be vaccinated. **Precautions do not have to be as restrictive as were implemented prior to vaccines.**
- **Singing is still a very hazardous activity**, even with masks.
- Choirs and congregational singing is discouraged
- A small group of masked cantors may be safe depending on the space and
- Advent/Christmas events that include children and unvaccinated people that are **amenable to social distancing** and masking can go on.
- **Follow CDC and county-level transmission statistics.** Take a long-term view: the overall trend is important

WATCH THE VIDEO

This educational presentation contains the professional opinions of the presenter for use by church leaders in decision-making, and does not constitute advice or recommendations from the synod.



Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



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