



Growing Together in God's Grace
3232 Washington Road + Augusta, Georgia 30907
Phone: 706-860-0439
Email: www.adventaugusta.org
Website: advluch@adventaugusta.org
Worship 9:30am Sunday Morning

Dear Advent Family,

October 1, 2021

Sunday, October 10th, 2021, we will be returning to inside worship...again!

Based on the current data and trends, the Task Force has recommended to Council that inside worship could resume. The Task Force recommends that the same protocols (masks, distancing, hand washing, etc.) used this Summer be resumed to mitigate the risk. (Inside Worship Protocols are listed below.)

In addition, the Task Force has recommended that Advent's inside meetings (Ministry meetings, Sunday school classes, Bible studies, etc.) can return inside starting October 10, 2021. The Task Force does require 100% mask wearing due to the delta variant regardless of vaccination status. The Task Force will continue to review the data and trends of the Virus which is still very much active. The CDC recommends mask wearing regardless of vaccination status while gathering indoors. As case numbers continue to decline and vaccination rates increase, Advent's Covid Task Force will provide updates regarding the use of wearing your mask. The Task Force strongly recommends that we continue to do our part to mitigate the spread of COVID by becoming fully vaccinated and getting the booster shot when you are eligible to do so.

Council has reviewed the Task Force recommendations and believe that given Advent's vaccination rates, safety protocols to mitigate risk and the option of Zoom worship for those uncomfortable worshipping in-person, Council approves the recommendation to return to inside worship on October 10.

We know that the pandemic is still very real and present, therefore, we must be vigilant with Advent's safety precautions. To gather safely and effectively, here are the protocols we will need to follow set forth by Advent's Council, Taskforce and Reopening Committee.

Inside Worship Protocols:

1. **You will need to register for worship.** This will help us to know how many will be gathering inside the sanctuary at Advent. Once the sanctuary is at capacity, we will have an overflow room for worship in the fellowship hall. There will be a large TV with Zoom to broadcast the service to enable participation with those in the sanctuary. Registering for worship helps us with contact tracing in case there is a COVID case in worship.
2. **Registration.** The Registration link for worship is: <https://rsvp.church/r/k9lnpkUJ> The link will be sent out with the weekly email. When registering, please register yourself and the number of persons in your household who will be worshipping with you. If you are not able to register online, you may have another member register you. You can also contact the church office by the Thursday before Worship, and we will register you.

3. **New Household definition.** A household is defined as anyone living in your immediate household. A new extension of this definition based on the new CDC statement is: If you are fully vaccinated (Two weeks after last vaccination shot), you may sit with others of a different household who are also vaccinated. An example of this, but is not limited to, would be: two single persons who are from different households but are vaccinated, may sit together in worship.
4. **You must wear a mask.** It is important that even if you are vaccinated, all persons inside Advent's building must wear a mask. We wear a mask for the safety and care for those who are not, or cannot be vaccinated. The recommendation from the Ecumenical Working Group on the CDC's update for COVID is: "Many congregations include people who are unvaccinated, including children, older persons who have not yet been able to be vaccinated, and some who have refused vaccination. Unvaccinated people of any age can get the virus and spread it to others who are unvaccinated. When we are among those who may be unvaccinated, we recommend being as the unvaccinated for the sake of the unvaccinated-- for their safety, and to avoid stigmatizing them." The Council, Taskforce and Reopening Committee uphold this recommendation. (The Pastors will remove their mask when presiding/preaching in the chancel area/pulpit while being six feet away from any seating areas.)
5. **Entering for Worship.** On Sunday morning, the doors to the building will open at 9:15am. To enter for worship, here are the steps to follow:
 - a. You will check in with the Greeters at the front door. Masks will be available for any who would need one.
 - b. Hand Sanitizer stations will be at the doors to sanitize before entering and when leaving.
 - c. Once inside the building, an Usher will direct you to a table with Individual Communion Cups, Bulletins and the Offering Plate. You will individually take what you need for your household/group.
 - d. An Usher will show you to your seat to help households/groups observe safe social distancing practices. (While good Lutherans like their usual worship seat, we ask that for the sake of others, we refrain from asking for a specific seat until the restrictions are lifted.)
 - e. During the service, we ask that your mask remain on with the exception of a brief time during the consumption of communion.
 - f. The worship service will be fully contained within the bulletin. There will be no hymn books or other items in the pews to help with sanitation.
 - g. There will be hymns during the service for which you are free to sing. However, we are requesting that everyone sings at a softer level to help contain the spread of contaminants in the air.
6. **Restrooms.** The two restrooms in the narthex will be available for those worshipping in the sanctuary. The bathroom by the choir room will be available for those worshipping in the Fellowship Hall. Only one person may be in the restroom at a time. There will be signs that flip over to show the bathroom is occupied. Please flip this sign upon entering and exiting. After you are finished using the restroom, we ask that you use one of the provided Clorox wipes to disinfect after use. If you have any questions, there will be signs and a sanitation person available to help guide you.



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7. **Exiting Worship.** After the service is finished, it is important for all persons to exit the building promptly. This is to help prevent the spread of COVID.
 - a. The Pastors will lead the procession outdoors, the congregation is invited to follow.
 - b. There will be a time to greet one another and the Pastors outdoors.
 - c. An Usher will be in the sanctuary/fellowship hall to help dismiss rows in order to proceed outdoors.
 - d. Once outside of the building, mingle and fellowship freely, while still practicing social distancing.
 - e. There will be a table set up for coffee and a time for fellowship to follow.
 - f. Sunday school will take place after the fellowship time and you may proceed to your classroom area.

We know that these steps are extreme. However, your Council, Taskforce and Reopening Committee take the health and safety of all who gather at Advent seriously. We are excited to return to worshipping indoors. We praise God for this opportunity to gather together in Christ's name. We continue to pray for a day when many of these steps can be removed. Until then, this is the safest way for us to gather together indoors at Advent.

The writer of second Corinthians states: "So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day." (2 Corinthians 4:16) As we continue to preserve in the midst of this pandemic, may we be renewed in Christ while not losing heart.

In Christ's love,
Pastor Jason Peterson and Pastor Andrea Windsor-Peterson