



*We aspire to be beacons of God's love and truth ...*

December 10, 2021

Dear Members and Friends of FPC Moorestown,

In the Sundays of this Advent season, we're reflecting on the spiritual practice of waiting. We each have our own waiting stories — often such stories are personal and painful. We're waiting together for this pandemic to end. We're waiting for a day when we won't have to think about masking and distancing. We long for a time when life doesn't feel so weighted with worries.

While reflecting on these challenges that face us while waiting, I read a quote by Henri Nouwen, *"To wait with openness and trust is an enormously radical attitude toward life. It is choosing to hope that something is happening for us that is far beyond our own imaginings. It is giving up control over our future and letting God define our life. It is living with the conviction that God molds us in love, holds us in tenderness, and moves us away from the sources of our fear."*

I'm excited to embrace Nouwen's radical attitude toward life, even life in a pandemic. Maybe you too are drawn to his attractive vision. As you read of some changes to our protocols, trust that God is molding us in love, holding us in tenderness and moving us away from the sources of our frustrations.

Your Session met on Wednesday evening, December 8 to reconsider our COVID protocols in light of the recent increase of the CALI (COVID Activity Level Index which measures transmission risk for COVID) score for Southwest New Jersey as published by the New Jersey Department of Health. Earlier this fall, Session decided that the CALI score will be the metric used to measure our COVID risk. Session approved the following on Wednesday evening. **These changes take effect on Sunday, December 12.**

#### FOR INDOOR SUNDAY WORSHIP -- SANCTUARY AND MILLER COMMONS

- 1) Masks required for all persons
- 2) No congregational singing
- 3) All choir singers masked

#### EXCEPTIONS FOR INDOOR CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

- 1) Masks required for all persons for services except for 11:00 p.m. which will be a mask optional service
- 2) Two verses of "Silent Night" will be sung as a congregation at each service. Participants at all service are asked to mask to sing this carol.

*continued*

## FOR INDOOR MEETINGS

- 1) Current protocols are unchanged. Meetings are mask optional for vaccinated adults, recommended for unvaccinated adults. If one or more participants are 18 years of age or younger, all participants are required to wear masks. This includes Sunday School and Youth Group meetings.
- 2) Participants in choir rehearsals are required to wear masks.
- 3) No food will be served indoors.

These revised guidelines remain in effect into January 2022 when the Session will again review these matters.

I thank the members of Session for all the time and effort they've given to a task that is often thankless and wearying. Your elders continue to consider and confront the demands of the COVID pandemic and they do so, in the words of a vow for ordination, "with energy, intelligence, imagination and love." I give thanks to God for these faithful servants.

We'll soon gather outdoors and inside to celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Savior. He is the bright and morning star. He is the hope of a coming new day. He is the source of our joy.

I thank you, as I have many times before, for your patience, understanding and support.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Stuart Spencer*  
Pastor