



*Presbytery of the Cascades*

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Dear Presbytery of the Cascades' Churches,

Grace and peace to you in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ.

The recent surge of COVID-19 infections has left many of us anxious and uncertain. Unvaccinated people continue to contract the virus and there is some evidence that vaccinated people can still spread the virus to unvaccinated people.

We understand how dizzying this time is with the changing risks associated with COVID-19 and the shifting restrictions and recommendations of this dynamic situation. Some congregations are asking if the presbytery has any specific guidance on gathering.

At this point, the Presbytery Leadership Commission assumes that each church has developed some decision-making body and process to respond in the most appropriate way for their congregation and for their area. Many months ago, we hit the place where a "one size fits all" approach would not work due to the risks associated with a particular county, age of members, other groups using the building, and the level of caution in the culture of a particular congregation. We have had some congregations who have taken advantage of the lifting of restrictions as soon as they could and others who have remained cautious despite allowances given.

**Having said that the PLC has consistently reinforced that all congregations should AT LEAST meet the minimum state expectations while promoting a more cautious than permissive approach.**

I have included links to the Oregon Health Authority and Washington State Public Health that provide the most up-to-date and specific guidance. Our recommendation would be that those making decisions check those sites regularly for the most recent updates and guidance.

I wish that we could give you specific guidance, but as long as you are not exceeding the minimum restrictions established by your state, we are leaving it up to the leadership of your congregation to make the most appropriate judgments for your congregation. If there is some uncertainty as to what to do, we would advise it is always better to be cautious than to take unnecessary risks with your members and or the community.

**Here are the links:**

Oregon: <https://www.multco.us/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/faith-based-and-community-groups-covid-19-guidance>

Washington: <https://clark.wa.gov/public-health/news>

Cascades Presbytery: <https://www.cascadespresbytery.org/covid-19-resources/>

Faithfully,

*Rev. Brian Heron*

*On behalf of the Presbytery Leadership Commission*