

# THE REFORMED CHURCH OF PORT EWEN

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20 May 2021

Dear RCPE family and friends,

The Consistory met on Tuesday evening to discuss the latest recommendations from the CDC and how it would impact our life together at RCPE.

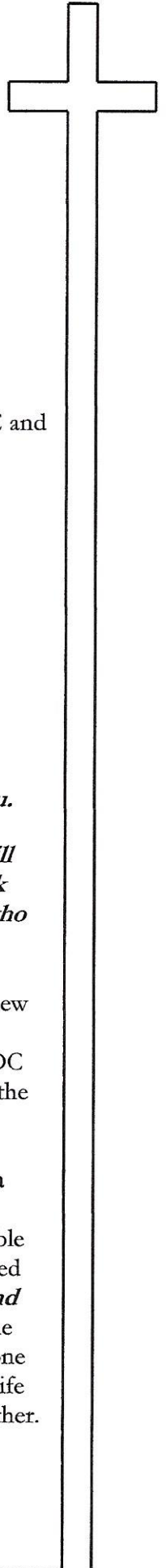
The Consistory decided, based on a number of factors, that we will follow the CDC recommendations at this time.

This means the following:

- *If you are vaccinated, we will no longer ask you to wear a mask in worship.*
- *If you are NOT vaccinated, we are requiring you to continue to wear a mask.*
- *If you are vaccinated but choose to continue to wear a mask, you are not only welcome to do so, but we will actively seek to honor you and make room for you.*
- *We will continue to have every other pew marked off, as some among us will still want to practice physical distancing. If you want to sit with others, please check with them and make sure it is okay. Otherwise, we ask that you respect those who wish to keep physical distance at this time.*

Along with the CDC recommendation, this decision was reached because of the low rates of new Covid-19 infections in Ulster County, the smaller size of our congregation which allows us a greater sense of knowing and trust, and because of the studies and information used by the CDC to reach this recommendation. The State of New York and Ulster County have since adopted the CDC recommendations as well.

**We understand that some of you who are vaccinated are not yet ready to stop wearing a mask.** This may be for a variety of reasons. You may be living with someone who is immunocompromised and want to protect them. You may have children at home who are not yet eligible for the vaccination. Or it may be that it is all happening just a little too fast for you and you need space and time to adjust. *I want to say to you that our church community respects you and the decisions you make. We will not shame you for continuing to wear a mask.* If anyone belonging to the church does shame you or fails to respect your wishes, please contact me or one of your elders immediately. As your pastor I consider this a matter of great importance in our life together. The Christian community is bound together in mutual love and sacrifice for one another. It is a discipleship issue if any of your brothers and sisters in Christ fails in this regard. I take it seriously.



St. Paul writes in Ephesians: "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all" (Ephesians 4:1-6).

Many of us are in different places on these issues. We have been throughout the pandemic. Even so, I have been so proud of you all as you have acted with patience and have maintained the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. I am once again imploring you, as followers of Jesus Christ, to be like Jesus. Let us continue to act in love toward others, even when we do not understand them, even when we disagree.

In Christ,  
Your Pastor,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pastor Ken".

Kevin  
on behalf of the Consistory