Rev's Reflections

*The *New* New Year*

Remember the good old days, when the start of a new year just meant reviewing the preceding twelve months and looking ahead to the next? In the last few years, changing the calendar after the holidays has brought a new task: dealing with spikes in illness due to colds, flu *and Covid*.

This year, once again, we are *encouraging* everyone who can to please wear a mask during larger gatherings, especially Sunday services. This is not a mandate from the board, but a gentle reminder from the folks who spend the most time around here, that this is the time of year when it's way too easy to get sick.

Making this request this year feels a little different for me than it has in the past. In September, I got Covid for the first time, and when I was better a few days later I had some terrible revelations. I was probably sick for a few days before I realized it was more than just fatigue, and so I probably infected others in the congregation. There were several others who got Covid at the same time, so even though I don't want to assign blame, I have to acknowledge that when there is an increase in transmission, it moves quickly. And finally, we've had several folks who are dealing with the effects of "long Covid," some of which are severe. Very Severe.

I hope you understand that encouraging masks is a tough ask that nobody wants to make. Nobody likes wearing masks, and we all know that it's a contentious issue. But we also know that no matter what we do, there will be people who are not happy. We want everyone to feel welcome AND valued. All we can do is whatever is right. And what is right is upholding our covenant "to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another."

We owe it to each other to do what we can to care for one another, and to be understanding of one another's limitations.

Meanwhile, I'm looking forward to a time when Covid is a thing of the past.

In Peace,
Rev Denis