

From Health Ministries

Courage, Hope, Compassion, Love!

It is December 14, 2020, 7:00 AM and I am excited to learn that a healthcare worker has stepped up to receive the first COVID-19 vaccination given in the United States. Given the current unrest regarding early vaccination for COVID-19, one might think that this was a very courageous move on the part of the healthcare worker. We have seen much courage from healthcare workers around the world as they put their lives in jeopardy to care for thousands of COVID-19 patients.

I view this immunization much like I view the flu shot; you either get the shot unless you have a valid medical reason not to or you run the risk of becoming ill with the disease. COVID-19, however, is not influenza and is not like other diseases that we or our relatives have had to contend with in the last 100 years. Of course most of us have not experienced firsthand what our ancestors experienced as they tried to avoid being the recipients of life-altering diseases such as the Spanish flu, smallpox, typhoid fever and others. Others of us are old enough to have experienced the polio scare that made us all line up in a hurry for an injection and then a sugar cube. While many who have tested positive for COVID-19 have not shown symptoms or have had only a mild illness, more than 300,000 individuals in the United States have lost their lives to COVID-19. Due to individual disregard for following public health guidelines regarding COVID-19 exposure, hospital beds that would routinely be used for other illnesses are now being occupied by COVID-19 patients. The COVID-19 crisis in hospitals has caused a shortage of medical staff and beds for non-COVID-19 and COVID-19 patients alike. In some areas of the country the hospital bed shortage has caused patients to be turned away, leaving them with no option for emergency care.

The vaccine does not contain SARS-CoV-2 and cannot give you COVID-19. It does contain messenger RNA and four lipid nanoparticles with no preservatives. While the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine are beginning to be administered across the US, questions abound about who can safely receive it. The vaccine was safely tested on 20,000 individuals, and most of the reactions to the vaccine were limited to twelve side effects, including injection site pain, tiredness, headache, muscle pain and fever. Side effects from the vaccination are a normal sign that your body is building protection against the virus. There is a remote chance that the vaccine could cause a severe allergic reaction. The important take-away is that side effects from having the vaccine are usually mild in comparison to the potential human body damage produced by an illness with the COVID-19 organism. For additional information on COVID-19, see the references below.

As this article goes to print, we will have once again experienced the joy of Christmas Day with the knowledge that Jesus came to save us. We welcome 2021 with much anticipation for a vaccine that can help to relieve us of our anxieties of the past ten months, help us get back to normal life - whatever that is - and potentially save our lives

from a destructive virus. We are capable of waiting for a good outcome and a vaccine for ourselves, for St. Andrew Lutheran Church, for our neighbors, our community and our world! As we wait for a vaccine, please join me with **Courage, Hope, Compassion and Love** in making a pledge to follow public health guidance to help prevent the spread of this disease.

Pledge to:

- **Mask up** like never before; inside, outside, and around anyone not in your immediate household.
- **Wash your hands** and/or use hand sanitizer frequently, especially outside your home.
- **Take a pass** on gathering in groups with friends and family.
- **Practice social distancing** in places where you come in contact with other people not in your immediate household.
- **Stay home**, except for when there is absolutely no other option. This means shopping online, ordering in, virtual playdates, and limiting contact with any individuals not in your household.*

***This pledge is from www.takethepledgecolorado.org as found on <https://schoolnursenet.nasn.org/home>**

It is not too late to get a flu vaccine!

Cornelia Pearson, RN, MN

References:

Branswell, Helen, A guide to Who Can Safely Get the Pfizer/BioNtech Covid-19 Vaccine, STAT, Health, December 14, 2020, www.statnews.com.

Covid-19 (Coronavirus disease), Benefits of Getting a Covid-19 Vaccine, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, November 24, 2020, www.cdc.gov.

Covid-19 (Coronavirus disease), 8 Things to Know About the U. S. Covid-19 Vaccination Program, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, December 13, 2020, www.cdc.gov.

FDA U.S. Drug and Food Administration, Fact Sheet on Recipients and Caregivers, <http://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download>