



IK Synod Staff COVID Protocols – July 2021  
*As of July 14, 2021, subject to revisions based on changing conditions*

For 17 months, we have lived in an ever-changing landscape as we navigate this pandemic and its ongoing impact to our lives, communities, workplaces, schools and churches. At this moment, we find ourselves in a time when civic and health authorities are loosening or even lifting the restrictions and recommendations that we have lived with for months. Yet both Indiana and Kentucky continue to lag the national percentages of vaccinated people and there is deep concern over growing variant strains of the virus.

As the IK Synod staff members have begun to resume limited travel across this mission territory, we are visiting communities that include a variety of situations regarding COVID levels and safety protocols in effect. To keep both the people within those communities to which we travel safe, as well as synod staff and their families (some of whom are too young to be vaccinated), our previous protocols for in-person meetings and worship were more restrictive than many of the recommendations from organizations like the CDC and other civic leaders.

We know that many congregations and their leaders have been making these difficult decisions for months about what is safe and best for your own communities when you gather, and we want to find a way to honor that, while at the same time allowing for synod staff to be out and among the communities in this mission territory safely.

New guidelines

Per CDC guidelines, fully vaccinated people may resume regular activities without a mask, however we still encourage individuals to consider wearing a mask for the benefit of those who are unvaccinated or at high risk. Masks are required for unvaccinated people.

Those who sing are asked to follow the mask guidelines above.

When you are inviting a staff member to be present at the congregation, whether for worship or a meeting, we ask that you provide the visiting staff member with the congregation's current COVID practices in advance of the meeting (as soon as possible). It will be helpful to know how the congregation addressing:

- Singing
- Children's Message
- Holy Communion
- Sharing the Peace
- Offering
- Fellowship activities (food)
- Social distancing and space in worship/meetings (indoor vs. outdoor)

Each staff member will then assess how that aligns with the synod's policies and work with the congregational leaders to make any changes necessary to be present, based on the specific context of the visit. A meeting with a small group might have different guidelines than leading worship, due to the proximity and size of the group.

Empower, equip, and encourage the people of God to make Christ known