



## Illinois South Conference COVID-19 Response UPDATE #19, Feb 1, 2021

While infection numbers are improving across Illinois, health experts warn we might have a third virus surge, as more contagious COVID variants begin reaching our area. If you are returning to in-person worship, please also be prepared to button up again should we have a sudden increase in infections. Some folks have been able to get partial or full vaccination, but they don't build full protection until about 60 days after their last dose. And, those without vaccinations are in the same position they have been throughout the pandemic. In other words, hang on a little longer with social distancing, masks and good cleaning protocols. We've come a long way, but we still have a few months to travel.

### **Lent and Easter Planning**

Have a Plan A and a Plan B for Lent and Easter this year. Be ready for socially-distanced, in-person worship, but also be ready for drive-in or zoom worship as the situation might require. A lot can happen between now and Easter Sunday, April 4.

### **Clergy & Vaccinations**

Several pastors have wondered if clergy would be considered a high priority for vaccinations. After speaking to the CDC, the Governor's office, and many local counties, it appears there is both a "no" and "yes" answer to this question.

"No," there is no unified state agreement in Illinois for all clergy to be considered among those eligible for vaccinations in the 1A or 1B groups UNLESS they are serving in a health field context or have another attribute that qualifies them. "Yes," there are some counties which, after a conversation where a clergyperson makes a case that their work requires in-person interaction and social distancing is not possible, will give clergy a vaccination along with groups 1A or 1B.

As a clergy person, if you want to be considered for early vaccination, our strongest suggestion is to advocate for yourself with your county health department. Please know, some counties are requiring verification of your vocational credentials. If you have standing in the Illinois South Conference and would like the Conference to supply you with a certification card, please reach out to Christy Pursell at [cpursell@iscucc.org](mailto:cpursell@iscucc.org).

### **Together in Christ's ministry with you,**

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