

On February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 the CDC updated its COVID-19 guidelines. Whereas before areas with “substantial” or “high” levels of transmission were “strongly encouraged” to require masks for everyone indoors, the new guidelines use a new tool that uses “hospital beds being used, hospital admissions, and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in an area.” According to this tool (found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>) areas with “Low” levels require little COVID restrictions apart from monitoring for symptoms (and getting vaccinated/boosted); areas with “Medium” levels should encourage those who are “high risk” to take precautions like masking and avoiding crowds; and areas with “High” levels should encourage everyone to mask indoors and consider other precautions as well.

Given that our community of faith spans James City County, the City of Williamsburg, and York county we will understand ourselves to be at the level of the majority of our communities (e.g. if two are “Medium” and one is “Low” we will consider SSLC to be “Medium”).

We will make sure to update our status regularly and include that information in our communications to the parish.

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Currently (02/28/2022) our levels are:

James City County - Medium

City of Williamsburg - Low

York County – Low

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Given that we are currently “Low” we will have no requirements in our building at this time. We strongly encourage everyone to get vaccinated and boosted if they are eligible and to monitor themselves for symptoms. However, we reserve the right to change our requirements based upon the CDC's tool and guidelines in the previous statement.

In keeping with Luther’s explanation to the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment, we will also endeavor to “fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and **interpret everything they do in the best possible light.**” We will assume the best about other’s choices regarding COVID mitigation strategies.