**Trinity UMC Covid 19 Response Team**

**Corona Virus Update #5**

(Nov. 6, 2020)

**What We Know Now**

Since our last update on April 6, 2020, much has been learned about the Coronavirus-Covid 19 disease. In mid-July the number of ***new daily cases*** in the United States peaked at around 75,000 new cases per day. In mid-July in North Carolina, the number of new daily cases peaked around 2450 per day. In early September, the number of new daily cases nationally bottomed out around 22,000 per day, while North Carolina bottomed out around 575 new per day. ***Currently the number of new daily cases*** ***is surging drastically***. In early November (6th), the number of new daily cases nationally is rising to approximately 131,000 new per day. North Carolina is around 2900 new per day.

**Age distribution of cases**

As the pandemic was emerging during the months of March – May, early data suggested that older adults (+60 yrs) were more susceptible than younger adults or children. However, during June–August the incidence was highest in persons aged 20-29 years, who accounted for greater than 20% of all confirmed cases. Recent data suggests that children and young adults are just as susceptible to catching the virus as do older adults, but are less likely to be hospitalized or die as are older adults. This suggests that strict adherence to community mitigation strategies and personal preventive behaviors by all age groups is necessary to help reduce infections and subsequent transmissions.

**What is forecasted?**

The Centers for Disease Control receives modeled forecasts from 20 – 45 modeling groups. These forecasts are combined into an ensemble forecast. The national ensemble forecast indicates an uncertain trend over the next four weeks depending on assumptions regarding the wearing of face protection and physical distancing. The ensemble predicts 450,000 – 960,000 new daily cases reported during the week ending Nov. 28, 2020. The forecast also predicts that reported ***Covid 19 deaths*** ***will likely increase over the next four weeks, with 4600 – 11,000 new deaths likely to be reported during the week ending Nov. 28, 2020.***  The ensemble predicts that a total of 250,000 – 266,000 Covid 19 deaths nationally will have been reported by Nov. 28, 2020.

**What has been learned?**

Many studies have been completed to better characterize how the virus is transmitted. Most studies have determined that the primary method of transmission is person to person airborne aerosolized water droplets from close (six feet or less) personal contact including hugging, coughing, sneezing, singing, kissing, etc. The virus can live suspended in the air for various lengths of time depending on air circulation, humidity, size of droplet, etc. Once the water droplet containing the virus settles onto a surface, it generally does not live for an extended period of time (again depending on the surface moisture, temperature, etc.) While it is possible for a virus droplet to live on a dry surface for more than a day or so, it is unlikely.

**What precautions should I take?**

***Now is not the time to let our guard down***. We should double down on our efforts to protect each other. Continue to practice the three WWW’s. Washing; hand and face hygiene is important. Wash your hands and face often. Wear your face protection to protect the people you are with. You may not be aware that you have the virus. You may not have any symptoms, but you can still unwittingly shed the virus to others. Practice physical distancing. Wait in lines at least six feet apart. Wear your face covering and practice social distancing, indoors or outdoors, when in the company of non-immediate family members. Don’t take it for granted that the people you are with are Covid free.

**How do I know if I have Covid 19?**

The symptoms of Covid 19 and annual influenza are almost identical. Don’t assume you don’t have Covid if you have symptoms of influenza: fever, chills, cough, difficulty breathing, fatigue. Contact your health care provider. If you have not already received your annual flu shot, get yours immediately. Your health practitioner can help you get a Covid test.

**Will there be a vaccine?**

Over 30 major companies world-wide are developing vaccines designed to create human immunity to the corona virus. In the United States, Pfizer, Moderna, and AstraZeneca are currently vetting their candidate vaccines for safety and efficacy. When each vaccine is deemed “safe and effective” by the FDA, it must be mass produced, distributed, administered and tracked. Geographic distribution has yet to be determined. The eastern half of the U.S. may not have access to the same vaccine as the western half. One vaccine may be a single dose. Another vaccine may require two doses administered 21 days apart. When the vaccine becomes available, will enough people take the vaccination to make a difference?

**We need to take control of our own circumstances**

There are many unknowns in our future. Too many of the personal and public decisions being made in our future regarding Covid 19 are not within our control. We, personally, cannot control the outcomes. ***However, we do have the control to protect ourselves and our loved ones from this Coronavirus pandemic. We do have control over our personal actions and decisions. We do have control over our ability to act responsibly toward our loved ones, friends, and neighbors. Our personal accountability to one another is our choice.***