RESPONDING TO COVID-19: UPDATE AS OF JANUARY 2022

Dear Wartburg Community,

Blessings to you and your families and friends this joyous Christmas season! I hope that you were able to find time for recreation and restoration with loved ones as we celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ.

I am writing on behalf of the COVID task force to share with you the latest policies and procedures related to COVID-19 that will inform our life together.

First, I want to emphasize that we continue our practice of being well-informed by seeking guidance from local and national resources, including current CDC information, all in service of implementing guidelines that best support the safety and health of our specific Wartburg Seminary community.

Second, I want you to know that the COVID task force will continue to meet regularly as conditions warrant, monitoring the situation both locally and nationally, and we will update our policies and practices as needed, as dictated by current conditions.

Third, it is worth repeating that the most up-to-date scientific research continues to demonstrate that vaccines and boosters are the best and most effective way to stop the spread of COVID-19, including the Delta and Omicron variants. We at Wartburg strongly encourage all those who are able, and their family members, to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and the booster. Finally, I want to reiterate that, as always, the health and safety of our community is paramount. As an example of that, once again we have made the decision to allow an exception for students to attend Spring Prolog Week synchronously, via Zoom, if they do not feel comfortable or safe traveling to campus.

In light of those introductory statements, the following specific practices continue to be implemented here at the Wartburg Seminary campus:
1. A temporary mask expectation for all indoor public spaces continues to be implemented (for best practices on mask-wearing, consult the CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html) Exceptions to this expectation are as follows:

- When in one’s personal residence
- When actively eating or drinking
- When alone in one’s private working space.
- Vaccinated faculty are permitted to be unmasked while actively teaching.

2. We expect that everyone who comes to the campus is vaccinated and boosted, unless medically prohibited.

3. Sanitation stations have been set up at various points throughout the campus, and we ask that you not only regularly wash your own hands, but also sanitize public use areas regularly, such as tables, as you are able, to supplement the work of our staff.

4. We continue to encourage you to follow the latest CDC guidelines in your personal practices and recommendations regarding exposure and quarantining. (see the “Key Points” for educational institutions here: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html). Note that Rapid Tests are now readily available; we encourage you to use a Rapid Test if you are concerned that you have been exposed and/or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

Please join with us as we continue to pray for the health and safety of all those in our community, in this country, and around the world who are sick and in need of healing, for children and the most vulnerable among us, for healthcare workers and others who are caring for the health and safety of individuals and communities, and for local, state, and national officials who are responsible for making policies to best safeguard their communities.

Thank you all for your thoughtful attention to and consideration for your neighbor: we mask (and vaccinate) because we care!

Blessings,

Kristin Johnston Largen

The Rev. Kristin Johnston Largen, Ph.D.
President,