

A LETTER FROM DR. SEAN LUCAS

November 19, 2020

My dear Friends:

Like some of you, since the end of August, our family has been really focused on Friday nights—we've been grateful our school has gone ahead with fall sports and with high school football. Even as the virus has disrupted a couple of our games, we've been glad Ben's been able to play and frankly glad to have Friday night lights to look forward to.

Especially as the team has progressed through the playoffs—the state semifinal game is tomorrow night and ECS plays Lipscomb—we've become even more aware of making sure that we stay virus-free so we don't spread it to Ben somehow and cause the rest of the team to have to quarantine, forfeit, and end their season. If their season ends, we'd want it to end on the field.

As you might expect, I and other church leaders feel the same way about Sundays—we so look forward to being together, worshiping the Lord around Word and sacrament. We've been grateful that the protocols we've had in place since the end of May have worked. But especially as we come into one of the high points of our church year—the advent and Christmas season—we want to make sure we don't have to quarantine and end the season on the sidelines.

Along that line, we've worked hard to make our facility as clean and as safe as possible. We recently did a study of air quality within our HVAC system, especially the main air handlers that supply the sanctuary and related areas. Engineers discovered that our current air flow exchanges all of the air in those spaces once every 20 minutes. Three times every hour, all of the air is passed through the system's HEPA filters, which capture .3 to 10 microns of airborne pathogens (I'm told that's really good).

In order to make sure we are cleaning our air at the highest possible rate, this month we installed Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization (NPBI) as part of our HVAC system. NPBI increases the size of the particulates so that they are trapped by the HEPA filters; studies show that systems running NPBI reduce various human coronaviruses by 90% and other airborne pathogens and viruses by over 95%. This system is used in commercial aircraft, clinics and hospitals (like Campbell Clinic and Baptist Memorial Health Care), and newer built school buildings.

That's what we've been doing to make our space safe. But you can do things too. Remember that if you are feeling poorly in any form or fashion, please stay home and use the Livestream. Remember to wear a mask when you are on the church campus. Remember to maintain some distance when you have your conversations, or even better, visit outside after the worship service. And remember to utilize the various hand-disinfecting stations around campus.

We all need this Christmas season, more than ever. I'm looking forward to preaching on the "Songs of Advent" from Luke's Gospel and very much want us to enjoy singing, praising, hearing, and sharing God's Word, sacrament, and prayer together at IPC. But to get there, we all need to make sure we are able to do so by staying virus-free and not passing this virus on to others.

In the grip of God's grace,

