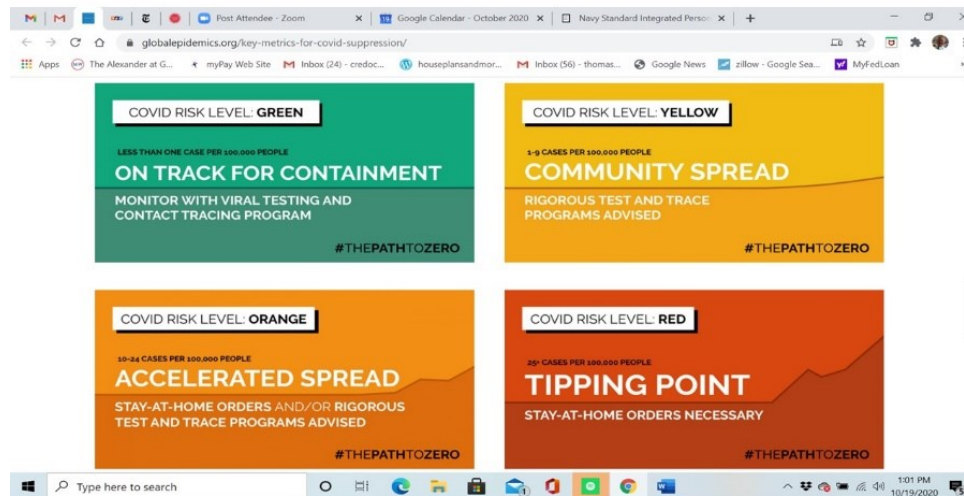


A Pervasive Concern

We cannot avoid the COVID-19 pandemic that has been with us all year, no matter how insulated we may think we are. There is no escaping the fact that people near us are exposed to the virus. Some test negative, while others have a positive result. Of those individuals who test positive, some get much sicker than others, and some of those will die from the virus. Currently, 293 of our neighbors have died in Jackson County.

For me, the pandemic is not just an ongoing situation that annoys me. There is a difference in depth between something being annoying and something being pervasive. The pandemic has pervaded my entire being. I cannot go anywhere without coming face-to-face with the potential for contracting the virus. When others are dying in Jackson County, or the state of Missouri, or our nation, I still feel how real the pandemic is, even though I don't know them personally. When my sympathetic nature is combined with the responsibility of keeping all who come into our church building safe during this pandemic, I am way beyond mere COVID fatigue. I'll call COVID exhaustion, to give it a name; and perhaps you feel the same.

The risk of infection is ever present, and here is how I measure our response as a congregation. As of Monday, October 19, Jackson County is at a risk level of 24.2. That means that the rolling seven day average of **new** cases is at 24.2 persons per 100,000 individuals. That puts the county in an red risk category (tipping point). Today, October 20, the rate is at 28.3, which is definitely in the red category. The chart gives you the classification criteria. That tells me the risk level is increasing around us.



(Available at <https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>. Accessed 20 Oct 2020)

This is why we are enhancing our COVID-19 safety measures at LLCUMC. The first change is that hand sanitizer will be more readily available for our worship services. It will be on small tables at the doors as you enter the building rather than inside the doors of the sanctuary. (It will also be passed around for the joint adult Sunday school class and in person meetings during the week.) Please be sure to use the hand sanitizer every opportunity you have.

The second measure will be to limit congregational singing. There are studies that show the force used to sing is greater than normal speaking. Consequently, aerosolized droplets carry farther, even with face coverings, in a closed ventilation system such as ours. I still want music in our weekly worship service, and I'm sure you do too, so we encourage you to hum the song and/or follow the words as they are projected on the screens in front (as we have done for past Sundays). This provides an opportunity to focus on the meaning of the lyrics rather than worry about the notes to sing or the rhythm of the song. There will still be accompaniment at both services, and there will be song leaders who will sing on your behalf (Regina Cooper for the 8:00 service, and I or another volunteer for the 10:00 service).

With the county's seven day rolling average now above 25 or more new cases per 100,000 (red category), I will discuss implementation of a third safety measure—taking temperatures as you enter for worship—with congregational leaders. It may be the only way we can “keep the doors open” and safely gather for worship with such a high-risk level. Again, the goal is to keep each other safe, so I welcome your input with a face-to-face conversation or an email (pastorllcumc@gmail.com).

I thank you for your help and support these past weeks as we have battled the pandemic to the best of our abilities. I ask for your continued patience in the weeks to come as we “fight the good fight,” and yet, by the grace of God, continue to be witnesses of Christ's love for each other and the community at-large *in spite of* COVID-19.

Yours in Christ our Lord,

Pastor Tom



On Going: Les Case, Wade Davis, Roger Grable, Richard Fuerst, Winnie Fuerst, Harvey Geary, Michael Hatfield, Linda Koleiny, Shane Miley, Nancy Rowe

Strength and Healing: Ken McDaniel, Mike McMillin, Andrew White, Gene Christ

Missions: Kenyan G-Marc Project (Chics for Chicks),

Hillcrest Transitional Housing, Harvester's Food Bank, Lazarus Ministries, Tarsney Lake Families, Congregation de Mellier, Heart and Soul Children's Learning Center

Please contact the office to update or add prayer requests

October 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
4 Services 8:00 & 10:00	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Services 8:00 & 10:00	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 Services 8:00 & 10:00	19	20	21	22 PPRC Meeting 7:00	23	24
25 Services 8:00 & 10:00	26	27	28	29	30	31

