



# THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## Dakotas-Minnesota Area

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*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. Psalm 19:14*

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior who is our redeemer and cares for all of us.

As many of you no doubt have noted, the infection rate from the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus has surged in recent weeks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued a recommendation that all people — including those fully vaccinated — wear masks when indoors in areas where infection rates have soared.

We know that there are varying infection rates across North and South Dakota. We urge you as a leader in your congregation and local community to seek guidance and pay close attention to your local city and county health departments, schools, and medical community members. At this point, health officials are urging residents to wear masks when indoors, even if fully vaccinated, in areas that are seeing a high rate of cases.

We also encourage you and your congregations to seek ways in which you can minister to and care for medical professionals in your community. We know with rising hospitalizations and concerns regarding bed space for non-Covid emergencies, these persons are under a unique amount of stress. Our call to be the hands and feet of Jesus for these persons so important.

As we have shared in the past, you must make the decision that makes the most sense for your context for ministry. Some areas in both of our states are among the least impacted in the entire country by the Delta variant. But others are among the most at risk.

Know that we thank God for each of you. For your resilience, perseverance, creativity, and for sharing the love of Christ with all. Please continue to serve the mission fields to which you have been deployed to show the love, grace and hope found in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Blessings,

**Laurie Haller**  
Interim Bishop

**Kris Mutzenberger**  
Northeast District Superintendent

**Bob Ruedebusch**  
Southwest District Superintendent

**Rebecca Trefz**  
Southeast District Superintendent

**Joel Winckler**  
Northwest District Superintendent



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