

April 30, 2020

In my role as Mayor and Chair of the Community Council, I write to update the Sewanee community on the latest guidelines from Gov. Bill Lee. As you probably already know, Gov. Lee has allowed his order for Tennesseans to remain at home to expire on April 30 and some businesses now have begun to reopen. The governor has emphasized, however, that Tennesseans must maintain habits like social distancing, working from home when possible, handwashing, and wearing cloth masks. Social gatherings of 10 or more people continue to be prohibited.

Most “Safer at Home” practices are still recommended by both the State of Tennessee and the CDC, and the “Safer at Home” recommendation for Sewanee residents remains in place at this time. Residents are asked to continue to limit movement outside their homes. Keeping space between yourself and others is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

The CDC asks all of us to slow the spread of COVID-19 by wearing a cloth face covering in public spaces, keeping at least six feet of physical distance between ourselves and others, and frequently washing our hands.

Masks are important, but often misunderstood: The benefit of wearing masks in public isn't to protect you from getting sick. It's to protect others from exposure if you are sick or if you're an asymptomatic carrier. Remember that people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus. If we all wear masks, we can help each other.

Please continue to care for and support one another through means that do not involve direct contact—dropping off groceries or other essentials for those who cannot get out and staying in touch through the various forms of social media. Make a “joyful noise” at 5 p.m. on Sundays to show appreciation for health care and other front-line workers.

And please continue to support our local businesses in whatever way you are comfortable doing so and their practices allow, whether that is online, via pickup or delivery, or in person.

Thank you for doing what we all can to protect one another and our extraordinary community.

John McCardell