

Health Ministry

Season of Hope

Just as summer flows into autumn and autumn into winter, these challenging times of Covid illness and economic crises will also flow into better and less challenging times. We will eventually have reliable vaccines and drugs to better prevent and treat the severe cases of the virus. The scientists have been working on vaccine development from early January when the virus was diagnosed in the world community. China put the DNA sequencing for this particular coronavirus on line to share with the world. Since this virus is a coronavirus related to SARS, Mers, H.N. they were able to use vaccines developed for these viruses and manipulate them for the Covid 19 virus. They did not have to start from scratch. That is why they are able to develop these vaccines as quickly as they are doing. I plan on taking the vaccine when it passes approval and is available for the public. Vaccines are the reason we have not succumbed to smallpox, diphtheria, typhoid tetanus, pertussis, measles, polio, etc. like many of our ancestors did.

We are an intelligent people who hopefully care about each other and act to protect one another. We are our brothers' keeper. To solve our problems we must stick together in hope and faith.

When I was growing up in the 40's and 50's, I remember families being afraid to be in public with their kids during the summer from Memorial Day through Labor Day. It was because your child might catch polio (infantile paralysis) a contagious virus that resulted in symptoms including paralysis and difficulty breathing. Treatments at the time were simplistic and there was no vaccine to protect you against getting it. We stayed away from public gatherings such as church, restaurants and movie theaters. Drive-in outdoor movie venues became popular. Families could isolate in their cars and watch a movie without fear of becoming ill. In 1952 there were 52,000 cases. Instead of shortages of ventilators, we had shortages of iron lung machines that helped people breathe. Parents couldn't visit crowded polio wards for fear of spread of disease! This April 12, 2020 marked the 65th anniversary since Dr. Jonas Salk developed the polio vaccine followed later by Dr. Sabin's oral vaccine, which gave us our lives back and helped to irradiate polio from a good part of the world.

I know we are all tired of this. We feel like Rip Van Winkle coming out of our 20 year sleep to the world changed. It is not the time to let our guard down. We must stay vigilant. The virus is on the rise. Look online at the Dutchess Dashboard website to find out how our area is doing case-wise town by town. That way you can see the risk of going to those places. Our tools we have had in our toolbox to protect ourselves and others hasn't changed: Staying 6' apart, stay outside as much as you can, minimize time spent in public places, use hand sanitizer frequently when soap and water not available. Keep your hands away from face and eyes. Get your flu shot. Indoor dining is a risk in restaurants because people take off masks and talk. The Covid 19 virus is an airborne virus that is very contagious. Make sure you are wearing a good mask in public. Your mask should be at least 2 ply in thickness. Three to four ply is better. It should cover your nose to your chin and fit snugly on the sides. Bandanas and gaitors are not very effective. The

right mask will protect you and others. As Covid cases increase, the quality of your mask should improve and protect your eyes by wearing glasses or safety glasses. Airborne viruses can be transmitted via eye membranes. If you wear a face shield you must wear a mask with it. When you remove your mask, remove it by ear loops, fold outside corners together, and wash hands after removing mask. Don't wear masks with valves.

Must has been learned about the virus and dealing with it the past months. Don't be afraid to keep your doctor and dentist appointments and any screening tests. These facilities are safe and well sanitized.

The holidays are almost upon us. With modifications we can still give thanks in spite of our challenging times. Keep your loved ones safe. Celebrate with family you see on a regular basis. Don't invite the virus, an unwelcome guest, into your home. You can catch up with the rest of the family when it is safe to do so. We will celebrate with our grandkids and their family out of state at a safer time.

Happy holidays. Stay well! You can do it! I have faith in us loving children of God. Remember none of us is fine. Listen to each other and do the loving thing.

Blessings,
Bonnie Biskup, Parish Nurse
FPUP Church
November 2020

¹UC Berkely historian Dr. Rachele Halensky,
Chief infectious disease Mass. General

C.D.C.