

First Presbyterian Church

Session Immunization Recommendations

August 26, 2014

Committee's Governing Principles:

1. God has blessed our church with a burgeoning number of children. All of us, and the Elders in particular, have a responsibility to protect our children at every level (spiritually, emotionally, and physically).
2. Because of a combination of (1) increased world travel, (2) increased immigration, and (3) a growing number who choose not to receive immunizations for themselves or their children, we in the U.S. are at significant risk for diseases that were once thought to have been almost eradicated from our country. These diseases are not minor illnesses: they can kill and they can maim, especially infants and small children, the elderly, and those who are immunocompromised. Ironically, the very success of immunizations has led some to believe that vaccines are not necessary. These serious and vaccine-preventable diseases are making a comeback. (For instance, there have been over 500 cases of measles in the U.S. in the first half of 2014—a 20-year high.)
3. Immunizations are extremely safe and effective.
4. Immunizations are a gift from God, mediated through the common grace of medical science, and to be received with gratitude.
5. Routine immunizations for adults and children protect not only the ones receiving the vaccines but also others surrounding them. Not being immunized as recommended may therefore be harmful to others, especially the youngest and weakest in our church.
6. Christian liberty allows wide latitude in our daily decisions for ourselves and our families. Christian love requires that we use our liberty for the glory of Christ and with regard to the welfare of others. Freedom in Christ is to be used humbly and gently in love to build up and to help others. If one's liberty harms another or infringes on the liberty of another, then it is the believer's responsibility to limit his own liberty out of love for the other.
7. We affirm the centrality of Jesus Christ and his gospel of grace. We must allow no secondary issues to divide our church. Maintaining the peace, purity, and unity of the church is the responsibility of all FPC members, and, most particularly, the responsibility of the Session.

Session Recommendations:

1. The Session strongly recommends and urges that all children and adults in our church be immunized as medically indicated.
2. The Session strongly urges all members to consider others in the matter of immunization for oneself and one's children. Not being adequately immunized places others at risk, often the weakest and youngest of our church; this is especially true in our nurseries and Sunday School classes.
3. The Session strongly recommends that any adult teaching or assisting in FPC nurseries or children's classes be immunized according to current medical standards.
4. The Session strongly recommends that any child utilizing FPC nurseries or attending children's classes be immunized according to current medical standards.
5. The Session authorizes the education of our congregation in issues regarding immunizations.