

ANNOUNCEMENT

The New CDC Recommendations and St. Paul's (effective 5/20/2021)

As you are aware by now, the CDC has issued new recommendations regarding the wearing of masks. They have shared that masks / face coverings are no longer necessary for those who are fully vaccinated. They are defining a fully-vaccinated person to be someone who is at least two weeks past their second dose in a two-dose series (Pfizer or Moderna vaccines), or two weeks past a single-dose vaccine (Johnson & Johnson's).

They recommend that anyone who is *not* fully vaccinated continue to wear a facial covering in public settings.

After considering the CDC rulings, as well as the guidelines published by our Eastern PA Conference, our church leaders have made the following decisions — to be **effective immediately**:

1. For worship services **INSIDE** our facilities, masks are to be worn until individuals are seated within the sanctuary. Once seated, masks will be optional - and based on the comfort level of the individual person. This is similar to what many restaurants are doing.
2. For worship services **OUTSIDE**, as per our current policy, masks are optional *while outside* - based on the comfort level of the individual person. Masks are to be worn upon entry into the church facilities or while engaging others who prefer to be masked.
3. We will continue to honor our current social distancing practices.
4. Children's and Youth Ministries will operate based on their current practices until further notice.
5. As is our current practice, singing is strongly encouraged!
6. We will not be "carding" persons for proof of vaccinations. We trust that you will make the appropriate choices for the best interest of the congregation.

These policies and procedures will be evaluated regularly based on newly received information, minimally every 30 days. Additionally, anyone who has symptoms of illness is encouraged to stay home and participate in worship online.

Obviously, there are many opinions about the topic of wearing masks. The CDC rulings are welcome news to some and concerning news to others. Regardless of your opinion on the matter, I know you will continue to remain not only respectful but loving of one another — as is fitting for followers of Jesus. Jesus taught that we are to put the needs of others ahead of our own, that we are to go out of our way to honor one another. Let's all do that. Our witness as a community of faith is based on how we treat one another. Let Elizabethtown see how we love one another.

We also must remember that in our society right now, simply because someone is wearing a facial covering does not necessarily mean they are not vaccinated. And someone not wearing a mask does not mean that they are vaccinated. BUT for us in the church of Jesus Christ, we need to base our behavior not on our rights, but on how we may love, honor and care for one another. Therefore, **when you approach someone who is masked, wear a mask. When you approach someone who is not masked, ask them if it's okay that you're not masked.**

Remember — our mission is to “out-love the world.” Let's model that love with one another.

peace and love,
pastor david