

## **Mask or No Mask?**

### **Understanding the Risks and Safety Inside the Church**

While many adults in our congregation have been vaccinated and everyone is excited that things are beginning to "feel" normal again, it's important to remember that our individual choices inside the church these next few months will help prevent or contribute to someone's long-term consequences.

#### **APPRECIATE RISKS:**

- Reports of lasting (possibly permanent) disabilities or side-effects of having Covid-19 include loss of taste, smell; loss of breathing capacity / oxygen levels; deterioration of heart, veins, arteries and lung material; severe chronic fatigue.
- Pfizer and Moderna Vaccines have a 1/20 chance of getting Covid even fully vaccinated...likely a higher chance with the Delta Variant around in July/Aug.
- Susie's family member got asymptomatic Covid three weeks ago even though he was fully vaccinated with Moderna by being in close proximity to another Audio/Visual technician at their church on Sundays. So remember even the most-vaccinated among us have a 1/20 chance of "break through" cases. Wearing masks helps protect ourselves and others, especially within indoor environments.
- Children under 2 years old are not supposed to wear masks, nor receive vaccines yet, and are only as safe as the decisions of everyone who comes in the church building regarding vaccination and mask-wearing and symptom monitoring.
- Children under 12 may wear masks but lack protection from vaccines until this fall and are only as safe as the decisions of everyone who comes in the church building regarding their vaccination status, mask-wearing and symptom-monitoring.
- While everyone is on a spectrum regarding their age, health conditions, immunosuppression and risk/reward ratios for worshipping inside or personally wearing masks, the more willing and able to wear masks and be vaccinated will certainly increase the safety and opportunity for more people to be able to enjoy indoor worship without getting Covid.
- Remember that due to asthma or other circumstances there are vaccinated teens and adults who cannot safely or comfortably wear masks indoors. The PPC session wants people in these categories to know that they are very welcome at our events and worship and to please come and participate!
- The church is committed to welcoming people regardless of vaccination status to indoor worship.

-We must all continue to monitor our own symptoms and stay away from church activities if we suspect we may have covid symptoms or have been recently exposed to someone with Covid.

### **WHAT WE'RE DOING TO PREVENT / MITIGATE COVID**

- Many vaccinated adults, including the pastor, always wear masks inside the church because they feel it is not too intrusive and may protect someone who is at greater risk of having covid in case they, themselves, happen to be asymptomatic carriers.

- keeping 4" - 6" distances from people not in your home helps prevent Covid from spreading. Remember to ask people if they are comfortable with touches or hugs before you approach them...or to speak up if you desire extra space.

- People can worship in ways that feel right: Worship in the Sanctuary or spread out in the Fellowship Hall sitting near an open door or watch live on Facebook / Zoom or watch the service later on our website / Youtube. Adult and Kid Sunday School have Zoom or other virtual options at 10am.

- When in use, we open one of the Fellowship Hall doors (toward parking lot) to draw in more fresh air and keep HVAC units in the "on" instead of "auto" position.

- The Sanctuary HVAC unit has been modified to deliver the highest practical amount of additional fresh air into the building so that it will be "like a door is open" without having to actually have a door open.

- The Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary HVAC units have had ionizing devices installed that helps particles like COVID become charged and "stick" to the filter or other dust particles and fall down...leaving the air circulation.

- Kids Church will meet outside unless raining so that some of our most vulnerable population can still enjoy interactions and church but have less chances of getting Covid.

- The church has bought 3 small HEPA Filter Fans which effectively trap COVID-carrying particles to be used in both nursery rooms if it rains and Kids Church must meet inside. One will also be in the sanctuary somewhat near the pulpit/choir area for a bit of extra safety.

- People can put a little "Keeping Extra Distance" card in their name tag that shows others that they prefer no touching / hugs at this time and are trying to enjoy inside in-person activities while keeping a good 6 feet distance at all times if possible.