

August 30, 2021

Message from the Science & Safety Team

Thank you for adjusting to our recent policy change of requiring the wearing of face masks while inside the church building. We know that this is frustrating for everyone. Our primary goal is to keep people safe when they are in our building while continuing to provide spiritual support and social connectedness during this pandemic. This change in our mask-wearing policy was caused by the “substantial and high spread” of the COVID-19 virus throughout Washington County. This resulted in the CDC and our state/local health departments recommending the wearing of masks indoors regardless of one’s vaccination status. We needed to do this to protect our children who cannot be vaccinated or for others who may have underlying health problems that put them at high risk of complications from the virus.

We are very hopeful that this step back is temporary. The CDC’s forecast for our area shows that our case numbers will soon start to plateau and then we should start seeing a drop in numbers. Once we get back below the “substantial transmission” level, we can then consider dropping the mask requirement for people who are fully vaccinated. We are hopeful because of the following reasons:

- 80% of people age 16 and older in the county have had at least one dose of the vaccine.

- 100% of people age 65 and older have had at least one dose.

- 63% of children ages 12-15 have had at least one dose; 70% of 16-17 year-olds.

- Vaccinations are continuing and readily available throughout the county.

- The school district is requiring face masks in elementary and middle schools.

Our church is doing our part to help our community knock down the spread of COVID-19 so we can get back to enjoying the things and people we love without the threat of the virus. We are looking forward to our fall programs and making sure people can be as safe as possible. Only God knows what the pandemic situation will be in the next few months, so we will continue to monitor the situation closely and make changes when needed or allowed. Please continue your diligence by wearing a face mask when in the building. We also ask that you pray for healthcare workers during this difficult time.

Graciously ~ Sue Hedlund, Jenise Howard, Mark Olson, Rachel Sass, Kathy Newton and Pastor Karna Moskalik