

Dear Friends,

On Monday, August 15, 2022, your church council spent considerable time discussing the on-going impact of Covid-19 on our ministries at St. Paul. We've been living with this impact for several years, from the days of shutting down on-site activities, to requiring masks and social distancing while on-site, to the present day where the CDC is adjusting guidance as we realize the earlier "Pandemic" is becoming more of an "Endemic" situation. We've come to realize that Covid-19 will be with us for some time (bad news), but we now have better methods to control it (good news). Today we have vaccines and medicines to combat Covid-19 and an adequate supply of high-quality masks to protect ourselves in public settings.

Through all these times, your church council has consistently agreed to follow the CDC guidelines to protect against Covid-19 illness. These guidelines are evolving as the world learns how to combat this disease. The CDC currently issues a forecast by county noting the severity of Covid-19 in each local region. 'Green' (low) or "Yellow" (medium) signifies masks are optional, but "Orange" (high) still recommends a mask be worn whenever one is at a high-density indoor event.

Recently, the CDC revised the direction for schools to make masks optional if a student has no signs of Covid symptoms. If symptoms occur, masks are required, followed by Covid-19 testing.

With all this evolving information, your church council passed a motion on August 15, 2022, stating: **Masks are recommended, but wearing one is optional at SPLC.**

To quote a line from Martin Luther's Small Catechism "What does this mean?" I offer the following comments:

Our mission statement is St. Paul Seeks to Share the Good News of Jesus Christ by Loving and Serving all.

To carry out this mission statement, we recognize that our members/visitors have varying desires/needs for the level of Covid-19 protection. For those who are healthy and vaccinated, the risk of Covid-19 is much lower than for those who are immuno-compromised or wish added protection either for their own health or to minimize the health risk due to pending travel or family visits, for example.

Therefore,

- The decision to wear a mask on-site will be a personal decision.
- We will have masks available for anyone who wishes to wear one when on-site.
- We encourage you to take the precautions most beneficial to your personal circumstances.
- We encourage you to monitor the CDC at <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>
- We encourage all members to respect everyone's decision on mask wearing as our way of "loving and serving all."

Blessings,

Norman Traub, Secretary

St. Paul Church Council