



July 31, 2020

Dear Highview Family,

As you all know, two months ago when we resumed our in-person worship services we implemented a number of modifications to our services in light of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. One of the things we have emphasized continually throughout this pandemic is that these modifications might need to be revised over time. The pandemic has been a rapidly changing situation, and therefore our response has had to be flexible as well. I am emailing to let you know about a change in our worship modifications that will take place **starting this coming Sunday August 2nd**.

When it came to the question of masks, our original modifications stated that masks were optional when attending church in person. However, yesterday Governor Evers issued a state-wide mandate requiring masks to be worn by every individual, age five and older, while indoors when other non-family members are present. All throughout this pandemic our elders have sought to follow CDC guidelines as well as the requirements from our local, state, and federal government. **Therefore, starting this Sunday August 2nd we will seek to comply with the governor's mandate by asking all who attend worship to wear a mask or face covering while inside the building.**

The governor's mandate does make some exceptions for the wearing of masks. These include individuals who have medical conditions that prevent wearing a mask. If you have one of these conditions you are free not to wear a mask. Additionally there is an exception for those who are giving a "religious" or "musical" presentation to remove a mask during the presentation. Therefore on Sunday you will notice that those of us who are leading in worship will remove our masks during the portions of the service we are leading/speaking, but will continue to wear them at other times.

I know that there are a variety of opinions when it comes to mask-wearing, and not everyone will see eye-to-eye on this. Additionally, I recognize that wearing masks is an inconvenience that all of us would rather not have to deal with when we come to church. But we are trying to honor the Biblical call to obey our governing authorities (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17) and love our neighbors (Matt. 22:34-40; John 13:35).

Let's not forget that all of these modifications are temporary inconveniences during this season. I am thankful that we are still able to worship together each Sunday (whether in person or via livestream), and I pray that in all things we would continue to seek to live by Paul's words from Ephesians: "[Walk] with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:2-3).

Pastor Stephen