



Christ Presbyterian Church, New Haven

August 10, 2021

Dear CPC Members and Regular Attenders,

By now you have probably heard that New Haven's Mayor Elicker published the following order:

Effective Monday, August 9th the city of New Haven will require indoor face coverings for all individuals—regardless of vaccination status. This order will apply to indoor settings, such as bars, restaurants, theaters, and offices where social distancing is not possible. Civil fines may be levied against establishments which do not enforce indoor masking requirements.

The Shepherd Leaders met last night and came to the following consensus policy concerning the use of masks and social distancing on Sundays (for now):

- We continue to ask all non-vaccinated participants to wear a mask inside the building at all time.
- For those who wish to worship in the sanctuary, we will return to social distance seating and ask that you wear a mask to your seat(s) but then you can take off your mask during worship.
- For those who wish to worship in the fellowship Hall with live streaming, we will not require social distance seating, but ask that you wear a mask both to your seat and throughout the duration of worship.

We are *all* disappointed that we are in this place AGAIN. But, well, “it is what it is!” We will suffer *together*! For those living in the surrounding towns, the policy may feel like an over-reach compared to your experience. It's true, as of writing this letter, New Haven is the only city in CT with this policy. But here is the thing, for the church whose first and primary mandate from heaven is to “make disciples of Christ” (Mt 28:19), we are willing to “suffer all things for the sake of the elect” (2 Tim 2:10), even if that means giving no offense to the Jews, or the Greeks... *or New Haven* (1 Cor 10:32).

As for our responsibilities to governments and CPC's response to this order, a quick read of Rom 13:1-5 pretty much settles it. For clearly wearing a mask doesn't rise to the level of disobedience to a command of God. And we should all pray for our government(s), that they will follow the science, as we say, with the best interest of the citizenry at heart, even as we the church will follow the mandate of the gospel as compelled by the love of Christ and for the sake of the world he came to save—“nothing to compel, nothing to repel, save Christ!

Affectionately on behalf of the Shepherd Leaders,
Preston

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