



Christ Presbyterian Church, New Haven

December 21, 2021

Dear CPC Family and Friends,

As of just yesterday I have been receiving Mission Church Updates with the heading “xyz church *after* or *post* Covid.” The optimism and public perception leading into Thanksgiving has with lightning speed reversed itself due to the quick emergence of the omicron variant. Accordingly, albeit amidst holiday travels and preparation, end of the year work demands, and no small degree of stress that comes with all of this, I am grateful for the speed in which our Shepherd Leaders were able to move schedules around and convene an *ad hoc* Shepherd Leader meeting so quickly to discuss our new situation.

Last night, after a thorough vetting of the situation and the different perspectives that exist, the Shepherd Leaders adopted the following *new* Covid policy concerning the issue of masking within the church building.

Effective immediately, full masking is required on Sundays and at other special public events (to be determined) throughout the entire CPC building (foyer, fellowship hall, classrooms, etc.) including during the entirety of worship. If for medical reasons there is a need to remove your mask at some point during Sunday services, you may contact the session moderator (Sr. Pastor) who with the Shepherd Leaders will discern a way to make that happen if possible. It has been determined that the “special event” of our upcoming Christmas Eve Compline Service will require full masking per our new policy. Otherwise, the prior CPC policy (that masks may be removed when social distancing is practiced) will remain in effect throughout the week and other events not specifically designated as “full mask.”

Let’s all be honest. “Covid stinks!” And we are all tired of it. But we are all in this together. And we all agree that public policy ought to be determined by the sciences (medical, social, etc.) and not “politics.” But we also know that there are honest differences of interpretations and conflicting priorities that emerge. As a church, while we pray our public policies will be determined by good science, our mandate is to make the gospel as accessible as possible to as many people as possible, and contextualized into our context in New Haven, not this or that other city or state. We hope you all can agree that we have been consistent in our attempt to follow this mandate, however much you may or may not agree with our decisions per se. I want to commend our shepherds in their service and encourage us all to support their decision however much you may or may not agree with it personally. There are bigger things at play here with eternal consequences that we can’t lose sight of.

I began our Shepherd Leader meeting last night with Paul’s encouragement in 1 Corinthians 15—after a thorough “dissertation” concerning the importance of the gospel given the reality of the resurrection, Paul says this: *Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.* **1 Cor. 15:58**

Hang in their CPC! Don’t forsake “the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace” together in steadfast and “immovable” service to the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Yours affectionately on behalf of the Shepherd Leaders,

Preston

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