

MASK USE (Updated 2/20/21)

The CDC continues to recommend that people wear masks in public settings, at events and gatherings, and anywhere they will be around other people, regardless of their vaccine status. (Feb, 2021).

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>

Masks are to be used along with strict 6 feet of physical distancing and frequent handwashing and/or hand sanitizer use.

When choosing a mask, look at how well it fits, how well it filters the air, and how many layers it has.

Do wear a mask that:

- Covers your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin.
- **Fits snugly** against the sides of your face- Make sure no air is flowing from the area near your eyes or from the sides of the mask. If the mask has a good fit, you will feel warm air come through the front of the mask and may be able to see the mask material move in and out with each breath.

The CDC is recommending layering masks as new variants of the coronavirus are present in our communities to ensure the mask is fitted snugly.

Layering can be accomplished in 2 ways:

1. Add layers of material:
 - Use a cloth mask that has multiple layers of fabric.
 - Wear one disposable mask underneath a cloth mask.
 - The second mask should push the edges of the inner mask against your face to fit snugly.
 - The masks should completely cover your nose and mouth.
 - **Make sure you can see and breathe easily.**
 - One of the masks should have a nose wire to prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask. Pinch the wire against your nose.
2. **Knot and Tuck** ear loops of a 3-ply mask (blue paper surgical masks) to create tight fit.
 - Knot the ear loops of a 3-ply face mask where they join the edge of the mask
 - Fold and tuck the unneeded material under the edges
 - For video instructions, see: <https://youtu.be/UANi8Cc71A0>external icon.

DO NOT choose masks

- That are made of fabric that makes it hard to breath, for example, vinyl;
- That have exhalation valves or vents which allow virus particles to escape;

Not recommended: Face Shields- Evaluation of face shields is ongoing, but effectiveness is unknown at this time.

Masking for Children

- Find a mask that is made for children to help ensure proper fit
- Check to be sure the mask fits snugly over the nose and mouth and under the chin and that there are no gaps around the sides
- Do NOT put on children younger than 2 years old

Other considerations for Regathering:

- Place mask on face prior to entering church buildings.
- Do not touch your face or the outside of your mask until you are out of the church or building.
- Remove mask by untying or slipping the elastic off ears without touching the mask outside.
- Wash cloth masks between every use.
- Dispose of paper masks after each use; do not reuse.

Other considerations:

- Be prepared to correct wearers if masks are fitted improperly.
- Persons unable or unwilling to wear a mask must not enter church buildings during this phase.
- Have adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene/mask behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), tissues and no-touch trash cans.
- Consider posting signage about
 - o how to stop the spread of COVID-19,
 - o everyday protective measures,
 - o properly wearing a face covering
 - o washing hands and covering coughs and sneezes.