

Why the Guidelines?

As we make plans to resume in-person church services, I understand some of the hesitancy toward the guidelines we have established. We all would all prefer to not be in this situation and to be able to attend church as we did in February.

It may be that those guidelines turn out to be unnecessary or incorrect, but while we continue to learn more about how to live together during the time of this virus, there are other considerations at work.

Our primary questions are: *What is the best way forward for Calvary during this time? How can we remain on mission and unified going forward?*

While many people share your opinion that precautions are not desirable and may seem unnecessary, many more disagree. When we surveyed our church family, 72% said they believe the precautions we are planning--including masks--are necessary and appropriate. They see the precautions as necessary to demonstrate care for others. We are acting in a way that we hope will allow as many people to attend as is possible--even if some are asked to follow precautions that seem (to them) unnecessary. We want to do that in a demonstration of love for those who will not be comfortable attending without masks. If they understand my mask-wearing as being for them, then my not wearing a mask may be perceived as a lack of consideration for them.

The situation is a bit analogous to the Corinthian church's question to Paul about eating meat sold in the marketplace. Paul indicated it was unnecessary to be concerned and that they could freely eat the meat in thankfulness. However, Paul goes on to say if my eating the meat harms my neighbor, I need to be willing to forego my freedom and my rights for the sake of my brother or sister--even if my brother or sister is wrong about eating the meat. 1 Corinthians 8.

Who is right or wrong about the wearing of masks or social distancing is not the most important question. We believe we are acting in a way to make it safe for all. That may turn out not to be true; but we are doing it from a heart of love for all and to demonstrate care for our church family and our community.

Here is a [link to our reopen page](#) with information and a brief video addressing the heart behind the precautions* we are putting in place.

*Just for clarity, the CDC recommends wearing masks to reduce the area of droplets breathed out from a person who may have the virus while having no symptoms. My face covering helps protect others, according to the recommendations of the CDC (and other health organizations). Other people breathe fewer of my potentially infected droplets because my mask keeps the droplets closer to me. My mask is intended to provide some protection for others.