



August 14, 2020

Church Re-Opening Update - Facemasks

Hello Everybody,

Following the Governor's update on the state guidelines given this week, the elders are recommending that we make a change in our own church guidelines regarding facemasks from 'encouraged' to '**mandatory**.'

For most of you, nothing will change as you have been very willing to wear facemasks when entering and exiting the sanctuary and when singing.

We appreciate your support and your willingness to accept the guidelines when you choose to come to live worship. We realize that there are many reasons people do not yet feel comfortable attending. We also realize that the mandatory facemask rule may mean that some who were attending will not be able to attend. For all of you in these categories, we will continue to invite you to a live stream of our worship at 8am and 10:00am. After 12pm on Sunday, you may view the entire recorded service online at your convenience.

With all the opinions and sometimes conflicting and confusing guidelines presented by different states, different places of business and different size groups, we continue to have three priorities:

1. **It is a priority to make an effort to be responsible and demonstrate love** in caring for the health of others. We want the larger community to know that we care about the welfare of one another.
2. **It is a priority to be good citizens** by following the instructions of Romans 13 where Paul writes:

"Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

² Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

³ For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended.

⁴ For the one in authority is God's servant for your good."

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We do not feel that our state guidelines are motivated with malice towards places of worship but are rather for the sake of the welfare of the public, 'to do us good'. Therefore, there is, at this time, no reason to claim we should be conscientious objectors and defy the state's guidelines.

3. **It is a priority to remain open as we are now.** It was really hard on our whole leadership staff to prepare a worship service with no one in the building. It is so much better now with people, even socially distanced. There is energy in the room again. We also know it was hard on all of you. Not gathering is unnatural! After all, the body of Christ is supposed to be together!

I appreciated the comment I heard from one man, grateful to be back, "I will follow every guideline you have and do anything you need in order to keep the doors open for worship. This is not ideal, but it is so much better than it was during the total shutdown."

I totally agree!

So, from now on, please note that **facemasks are mandatory** when coming and going and singing. When socially distanced or outside, you may take them off.

Stay Faithful!

Pastor Ken



Hampton Falls
BAPTIST CHURCH