

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

I'm writing as your pastor to make sure that our whole church family is made aware that the city of Yankton has passed "an emergency ordinance requiring the wearing of face coverings in certain situations to slow the community spread of the novel coronavirus causing COVID-19 disease." This ordinance is currently in effect.

I (Pastor Cory) and the elders of the church are available to answer any questions that you might have about how this affects our church gatherings. This letter attempts to answer some questions that you may have but please feel welcome to reach out if you have remaining questions after reading.

### **What You Need To Know**

- You can read the ordinance (Ordinance 1044) on the City of Yankton Website [HERE](#).
- The ordinance applies to any premises open to the public.
- The ordinance carries no penalties for violations. Quote: "There shall be no fine or other penalty for any violation of this Ordinance".
- However, all property and business owners are being, "directed to refuse service and turn out all person refusing to cooperate with the terms of the ordinance with enforcement assistance provided by the Yankton Police Department under existing laws applicable to trespass."
- The ordinance recognizes certain exceptions to the requirement. Key exceptions include but are not limited to: children under the age of five, individuals who are teaching or preaching at least 6 feet from others, individuals with medical conditions, and even those with mental health conditions.

### **How Will This Affect Our Gatherings?**

First: as the elders of the church we are asking every one in our congregation, who is able, to wear a mask when gathering for any church event (e.g., Sunday morning worship, Sunday school, and Wednesday night studies).

Second: if you have a good reason for not wearing a mask, like the exceptions listed in the ordinance, you are still welcome to worship and gather with us as a church. If you are not wearing a mask on church premises we will give you the benefit of the doubt, assume you have good reason for not wearing a mask and cause you no trouble.

Third: Understand that, because of the exceptions in the city ordinance, we can not guarantee that everyone who gathers for worship with Discovery Church will wear a mask. In addition, please remember the masks themselves are not deemed to remove all risk of spreading or contracting the Covid 19 virus. If you continue to feel uncomfortable in public gatherings where there is a risk that someone will not be masked, there is no pressure on you to resume worshipping in public. We miss you, but understand your desire to minimize risk.

Fourth: We want to continue to remind everyone to monitor your health closely. Please continue to observe our recommendations since this season began:

- If you are **sick or experiencing any symptoms please do not come to church**. Use caution and seek medical advice instead.
- If you are in a **high-risk category** (e.g., compromised immune system, etc.) consult a medical professional that you trust to help make the right decision for you when it comes to public exposure.
- **Don't feel pressured** to be back in church or volunteering as usual if you're not ready. If you're wondering how to make a decision about when to get back into a church routine, seek advice from trusted brothers/sisters in Christ, wisdom from God's word, and listen to your conscience.
- Remember that **masks are available** in the church building if you want one.

Finally: We recognize that it is impossible to please everyone. Many will think this ordinance is not strict enough. Others will think it is far too strict. But we're all just trying to do the right thing. It is our prayer and hope that we can continue to show each other grace and mercy in these incredibly stressful, contentious times. As you observe

each other's lives please give one another the benefit of the doubt as family in Christ (1 Corinthians 13:7). Colossians 3:16-17 directs us to, *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup> And **whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**"* Please take verses like these to heart as we are communicating about different opinions on these matters. In addition, please continue to pray for all those who have been affected by and suffered painful losses because of this disease.

This is an especially good time to be resolved in your heart to pray for our city commission. This has not be an easy time for them and they, like all leaders, have to endure unfair criticism and be challenged in unexpected ways. The Lord calls us to pray for them and be gracious. *"First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:1-4 ESV). Please join us in humble and grateful prayer for civil government.

The Lord Jesus has chosen us for this time and place. He is the one who has brought us together as a church for this season and he has good purposes in all that he decides. On a personal note, I remain and have only grown in my gratitude for Yankton, for Discovery Church and for the Lord Jesus in this strange season. I hope you'll share my joy and gratitude for all our blessings as a family in Christ. What a joy to be forgiven and to share the hope of a future with no viruses, no debates or quarrels, and nothing but endless joy in fellowship with Christ and each other.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Cory and the elders of Discovery Church

