

## Notes from Faith Leader Drop in Office Hours with Dr. Paul Cieslak, Aug. 3, 2021

### Choirs –

- The more people in your building, the higher the likelihood someone has COVID.
- Currently advise that either masks be worn during singing and/or greatly reduce size of choirs and those singing.
- Ask folks to be vaccinated.
- When wearing a mask, physical distancing is less important.
- Ventilation is important. Open doors and windows.
- One congregation has purchased “singing masks:”  
[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B08PPYX1X7/ref=ppx\\_yo\\_dt\\_b\\_asin\\_title\\_o00\\_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B08PPYX1X7/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o00_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1)

### Should preachers/teachers wear masks?

- If infected, you can shed a lot of virus during a 20-minute teaching.
- If there is distance between you and the congregation (at least 6 feet) and there is good ventilation, risk is low.
- If you are vaccinated, risk is lower, though is still recommended by OHA indoors during this Delta surge.
- One congregation purchased insert for masks to help speak more easily.  
[https://www.amazon.com/Homemade-Silicone-Comfortable-Breathing-Washable/dp/B08GQ16QY2/ref=sr\\_1\\_4?dchild=1&keywords=15pcs+Clear+Face+Inner+Support+Frame+Homemade+Cloth+Cool+Silicone+Bracket+More+Space+for+Comfortable+Breathing+Washable+Reusable&qid=1628016123&s=hi&sr=1-4](https://www.amazon.com/Homemade-Silicone-Comfortable-Breathing-Washable/dp/B08GQ16QY2/ref=sr_1_4?dchild=1&keywords=15pcs+Clear+Face+Inner+Support+Frame+Homemade+Cloth+Cool+Silicone+Bracket+More+Space+for+Comfortable+Breathing+Washable+Reusable&qid=1628016123&s=hi&sr=1-4)

### Kids

- What we have seen in school settings (controlled classroom environments) spread has been low. However, in extracurricular activities like sports, etc. where the environment is not as controlled, we have seen lots of transmission.
- Do as much outside as possible
- Mask use is safe for kids over the age of 2

### Counseling

- Is counseling in a typical size office and/or confessional safe?
  - More space between individuals the better
  - Get vaccinated
  - Best practice: hold all meetings outdoors. Find a private space if needed.

## Large Faith Gatherings

- Should everyone be wearing a mask?
  - Anytime you aren't masked and/or not vaccinated, you are taking a risk.
  - Continue streaming and encourage people to stay home if they aren't comfortable with that risk.
- Should we consider reducing our gathering size indoors?
  - Yes; the more people indoors, the more likely that one of them will have the virus and can spread it.
  - Masks are very important indoors; they reduce the amount of viral spread by stopping larger droplets and some smaller ones.
  - Ventilation is important; make sure air circulation pulls in air from outside, otherwise you're just blowing around the same air, possibly the virus.
- Is air conditioning safe?
  - Anything that brings in outside air is good.
- Is Communion safe?
  - If you are a minister serving communion, and are vaccinated, it is low risk. If not, this may be higher risk, and wearing a mask with good hand hygiene is important.
  - Continue to use single serve elements. Avoid a shared cup.

## Eating

- Eating outside can be done safely.
- Recommend doing any food/drink outside.

## Baptisms/Holy Water

- Baptisms, holy water, anointing oil is not considered high risk.

ICU patients have tripled in the last 2 weeks

Hospitals are already at capacity without COVID, and now COVID hospitalizations are sharply increasing in the last several weeks.

Important to remember that hospital capacity—in terms of both beds and available staffing—continues to be the driver behind mandates/restrictions.