



Our Revised Gathering and Events Guidelines

After much reflection, discussion, and prayer, the Elders have reconsidered our view on the Ohio Health Department mask mandate. In the beginning, churches were exempt from the mandates and we took measures as a matter of wisdom. When we mandated masks at Chapel Gatherings and Events, we did so because we believed it was best. At that time, it happened to align with what the Health Department was doing and therefore did not raise the questions we now face.

Recently, the governor and the Ohio Health Department consolidated the complicated set of mandates and directives to make them much easier to navigate. This has led to significant discussion about our approach to requiring masks in the Chapel's public gatherings and events. In removing the Elders mandate on March 23rd, 2021, we did so given the best information we had considering the decline of cases, the decline in hospitalizations, the rise in immunizations and other factors.

However, the Ohio Department of Health (OHD), on April 8, 2021, made it clear that they are making the mask orders for all persons over ten years old except for those with certain health conditions. The only exception to the mask mandate that applies in a religious gathering is for the officiant(s). The Ohio Health Department Mask Mandate applies to you even at religious gatherings. The only other possible exception is when you are in a private residence in which a Flock meeting is taking place.

We understand that there are many different opinions about masks. Christians disagree about the necessity, the efficacy, and the legality of their being mandated. Regardless of your personal opinion about masks, if you go to any store or restaurant you usually comply with the OHD's orders as implemented by that particular business. Whether you are required by texts like Romans 13:1-7 and Titus 3:1-2 to comply with the OHD mandates continues to be the subject of many debates. While we want you to be clear in your conscience, the Elders have taught that Christians are to submit to the government and may disobey only when commanded to sin. Wearing a mask might be an impediment to what we do together as Christians, however wearing one does not cause you to disobey God. You can still freely worship, learn and fellowship.

These guidelines are effective April 13th, 2021 and will automatically expire on June 1, 2021.

1. At our public events, we will provide for social distancing for those who want or need it. For our worship gatherings, we will continue to provide the overflow room with no singing and masks required.
2. *While the Elders are not mandating masks under our authority over church gatherings, we are reminding all who attend that the Ohio Department of Health order does not exempt Chapel gatherings or events on our campus from mask wearing. Please be sure that you understand how these orders apply to you and the Scriptures' commands to submit to our government, while keeping your conscience clear.*

3. Anyone who is sick, has a fever or has well-known COVID symptoms should not attend our gatherings or events and join us online.
4. Anyone who has tested positive may not attend for ten days beginning on the date of test (not the date of the results).
5. Ministries may set Ministry Focused Guidelines for their ministry teams and events. Guidelines must be submitted to and approved by the Elders. Current approved Ministry Guidelines automatically renew until June 1, 2021
6. The Bible in Ephesians 4:29-5:2 and Romans 14 commands us, in our attitudes and actions, to be generous and gracious to those holding opposite views.

Chapel Campus Guidelines

- Social distancing is now 3 feet as recommended by the CDC.
- We are ending the Chapel Campus Gathering and Event Minimal Touch Guidelines on March 24, 2021.
- We are extending the Chapel Food Service Guidelines for events with **over 25 people being served** until **May 1, 2021**.
- We are ending Chapel Office guidelines on March 24, 2021 except as required by Law.

Children's Ministry Guidelines

- We are extending the Children's Ministries and Nursery COVID guidelines until June 1, 2021.