

Dear Church Family,

Happy Thanksgiving!

As God's children we have much to be thankful for. Psalm 136:1 says, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good". Truly He is good! Not only is He good in His nature, He is also good to us! In Christ, we are blessed beyond measure. In Christ, we have been given everything we need pertaining to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). In Christ, we are overcomers in the struggle against sin and death, and have been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred to His Kingdom (Col.1:13).

All of this remains true...even in COVID times, we continue to be blessed. Though Canada has had some setbacks, we are still a very prosperous country by world standards. Many churches have not been able to meet at all, yet we have been able to meet back in the building for a few months now. Due to technology and much help from those who know how to use it, we have enjoyed many times of interaction and worship both in the building and from our homes.

As many of you know, there have been some recent updates from both our provincial and municipal governments regarding the use of masks in public buildings. Up until this week, churches in Grey/Bruce have been exempt from requiring masks and therefore, we were able to recommend and encourage mask use, while still not making it mandatory. The exemption has run out and **the provincial laws now require us to wear masks at all times while in our building, in just the same way that masks are required in any store or business. This will affect not only our Sunday Service but also other meetings that have begun to happen in the building, such as MIA, Women's Bible Study, Youth, and Prayer Mtg.** Those involved in the leading from the front will not be required to wear a mask while they are singing/speaking. Other provincial exemptions remain in place (no mask required for those under two, those with underlying health conditions, etc.).

For some of you, this comes as no big surprise as you have already gotten used to wearing masks in other places, and you have wondered why it has not been required before now. For others, the whole "mask thing" seems overstated and you feel your freedoms are being overstepped.

Personally, I have wrestled through all of the COVID issues in the same way that everyone else has, and believe many are suffering from COVID fatigue (apparently that's a thing 😊). My biggest concern all the way along, has not been for the actual virus but for the way that we are being kept apart from each other as a church and community. We struggle to follow the latest guidelines while still doing our best to stay connected with each other. I wish we were not required to wear masks at church, I really do. But it doesn't keep me from worshipping God. God is bigger than our current struggle. He is calling us to remain faithful to Him in spite of the present challenges. He may even be using these challenges to develop His character in us. He may use a little piece of cloth with elastic on it to help us learn patience and perseverance, to be less self-centered, to have more love and compassion for others, and to grow in humility. And it occurs to me, that if we grow in these areas, we have more things to be thankful for!

A virus does not define us. Masks do not define us. Zoom does not define us. A building does not define us. We belong to Christ. He defines us.

"...For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory..." 2 Cor.4:17

Hope to see you Sunday (either in the building or on Zoom)



Pastor Peter,

On behalf of the Reopening Team (Heidi Coolidge Eric Esau, Ken Paterson)