

March 2022 Masking Update from Dr. Allison Evanoff
Approved by Church Council

As masking mandates get lifted many places, we are asked to discuss our #askingformasking policy in our church community. There are several things to think about when we discuss this:

- First is the local case count. I am happy to say the numbers are definitely improving. The most recent surge, mostly caused by the Omicron variant, has definitely subsided.
- Second is your own health situation – do you have a high risk health condition and are you vaccinated? It has been well proven that older adults (>65), those with certain health conditions (such as diabetes, heart, kidney, liver disease, cancer, immunocompromised to name a few) and the unvaccinated are more likely to be hospitalized and/or have more severe disease or prone to ‘long Covid’. If any of this applies to you or a loved one in your home, you should do all you can to protect yourself and loved ones.
- Third is the big debate on whether masks work. Please see the graphic below, which does show YES, masks work.
- Fourth is the other preventive measures that have been shown effective such as physical distancing and hand hygiene.
- Lastly, this is an ever evolving situation. Remember the analogy I’ve mentioned previously that we are ‘building the plane while flying it’?? We may choose to lift our #askingformasking right now, but we ask that you are adaptable as the situation changes. We don’t know what new variants will be like and there likely will be other surges.

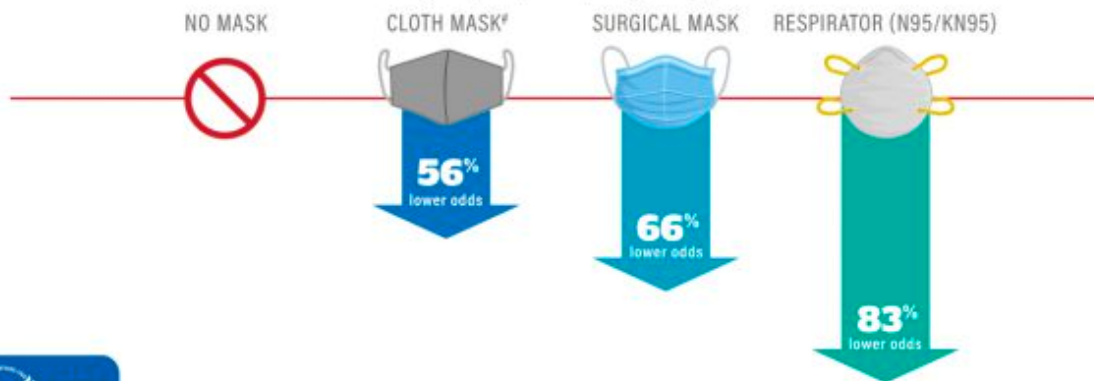
With all this being said, I think with the current situation, we can safely say we no longer are #askingformasking but rather we encourage you to make the best decision for yourself and your loved ones. We can show our love for others by being supportive and not critical of folks who mask up indoors and supportive and not critical of folks who do not mask indoors.

Beginning Sunday, March 6, we will be encouraging everyone to make the best decision for themselves. For those who prefer to sit in an area where masking is required, we will maintain a few rows towards the back of the sanctuary and we ask that anyone not masking refrain from sitting in this area. Thank you all for your patience and commitment to love one another.

People who reported always wearing a mask in indoor public settings were less likely to test positive for COVID-19 than people who didn't*

WEARING A MASK LOWERED THE ODDS OF TESTING POSITIVE

Among 534 participants reporting mask type[†]



bit.ly/MMWR7106

* Matched case-control study, 1,828 people, Feb 10–Dec 1, 2021

[†] Compared people with similar characteristics (e.g., vaccination)

* Not statistically significant

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