

Dear High Point Church family,

It is with a hopeful heart that I inform you that HPC will be removing our masking requirements from our ministries effective immediately after the expiration of the Dane County mask mandate on Tuesday, March 1, 2022. We will not be asking staff or volunteers to wear masks in ministry environments, and will no longer post signage encouraging masking. Masks will also be optional in the school.

Of course, anyone who believes wearing a mask should still be done for personal health reasons, or for the care of others, should feel welcome to wear one. Additionally, there will be a designated masked section on the far left (west) side of the balcony where masks will be expected in order to allow for as much social distancing as possible for those concerned about infection. Being inclusive in these ways towards those with compromised immunity is something we can do with little cost to everyone else. The livestream of the worship service will also continue.

I want to encourage all of us to continue to pursue peace and thankfulness at this time in the body of Christ. We do not know what tomorrow holds, and hopefully the strain of this dividing influence will be lessened for some time. Some relief from that pressure will hopefully allow us to reflect on our thoughts, choices and actions during these COVID chapters. Have we lived in fear and anxiety in a way not in line with the peace of Christ? Have we served others in ways we should? Were we consistent in our convictions? Were we more interested in the approval of those with our political loyalties or the familial unity, progress and growth of our eternal blood-bought family in Christ? Have we spoken out of anger, pride, humility or prayerfulness? This is a good time to evaluate how things have gone—and to pursue growth in areas where you don't think you walked in God's good, pleasing and perfect will (Rom 12:2). Romans 12 is a great chapter to reflect on prayerfully in this.

Whether we are "out of the woods" or just in a glade or clearing in it, I don't know. We should enjoy the sunlight of relief in the moment, and know that more unknown joys and trials await us whether related to a pandemic or not. There will always be the joy of a new good to do, or the glory of a new grief to bear.

High Point must be a church that pursues the truth in gracious love, and that demonstrates to the world that our loyalty to Christ commits us to each other in a way that cannot and will not be broken. That under his banner, we will find a way to love each other, to tell the truth, to do the good, and to serve the world as best we understand. Destroying all dividing walls of hostility—racial or political (while still caring about race and politics)—is an act of worship, devotion, discipline, and godliness. It is a critical part of our witness and deeply pleasing to God.

As a pastor, I am proud of how our church has weathered this chapter thus far. Strive now to please him more and more—whether in the open air of relief, or in the sharp pain of the next trial. We must, and can, face either together. To know that I will do both with many of you is one of the great comforts God has given me in this life.

Grace and peace to you all,

Nic Gibson
Lead Pastor