

Dear Congregation at Luverne CRC,

July 30, 2020

Council (elders and deacons) met this Wednesday evening to discuss further the MN government mandate which requires the wearing of masks in all indoor public spaces.

For some of us this executive order is an unnecessary and an unwelcome government intrusion into our lives. Others welcome the executive order since it helps them feel safer and less likely to be infected with COVID-19 when we meet together. **Whichever of these camps we may be in, it's important for us to protect and maintain our unity in Christ.** The Covid-19 situation has been frustrating and stressful for most of us. Let us not take out our frustrations on each other but *"Let us make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of meat (masks)."* (Romans 14:20)

Why does Council encourage complying with the mask mandate? Remember how Romans 13 calls us to Gospel living:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. (Romans 13:1-2)

Verse 5 adds,

Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. (Romans 13:5)

If authorities require us to do something that is immoral and disobedient to God, we are to say with the Apostles in Acts 5:29, "We must obey God rather than men." What about the mask mandate? Does it require us to do something immoral? Inconvenient – yes; immoral – no. So in this case we are to follow the instruction given in Romans 13.

Note as well how our catechism explains the fifth commandment. God's will is....

That I honor, love, and be loyal to my father and mother
and all those in authority over me;
that I submit myself with proper obedience
to all their good teaching and discipline;

and also that I be patient with their failings—
for through them God chooses to rule us.

For these reasons Council sees it best to continue encouraging compliance with the mask mandate, which also tells us to post face covering reminders by the entrances to our church building.

The mandate allows for exceptions for those who are under 2 years of age or who have a medical condition, a mental health condition or a disability that makes it unreasonable for them to have to maintain face coverings. We leave it to each member/family to decide whether or not these exceptions apply to them. **We trust that those who wear masks will not judge those who do not, and that those who do not wear masks will not judge those who do.** We value all our members and we look forward to worshipping and working together with you all.

“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” Romans 15:5-7

The Luverne CRC Council