



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER | NOVEMBER 13, 2020

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A NOTE FROM PASTOR DAVE

The elders at RiverValley are committed to evaluate and respond to COVID-19 as things continue to change here in Oshkosh and surrounding areas. Because the virus is spiking here and the hospitals are full, we are going to change from encouraging mask wearing to requiring masks to be worn in the building starting on November 22nd.

We know that some of you do not want to wear a mask, because you disagree

trajectory of your exhaled pathogens, especially when we sing. So we are asking you to wear them to share love and care for those around you.

This Sunday, November 15, we would appreciate it if you would wear a mask as you come in. The following Sunday, November 22, we will require one for entry and are asking you to please participate. The sooner we practice this the better. We know that you may have questions, need further clarification, or possibly have some disagreements. Feel free to email or talk in person to any of the elders, Pastor Dave, or Pastor Wyatt.

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ELDER UPDATE

Elder Position on Coronavirus - October 9, 2020

The elders at RiverValley Church believe that the assembling together as the body of Christ is essential to life and growth. Therefore, staying open for services is a high priority. We also believe God calls us to respect our authorities, so it will be our plan to follow the current mandates given by our government, as much as possible without compromising biblical commands and as long as religious groups are not being singled out for limitations. Present guidelines include urging everyone to wear a mask unless speaking from the front. Conditions may also lead us to move to online-only services, if necessary, but it would be only a short time and only as dictated by levels of infection at our two local hospitals. It is our desire to consider others and public health in the way we follow Christ without letting public opinion dictate our path. We will honor your decision to attend or not attend in-person during the pandemic.

Elder position on Coronavirus – November 11, 2020

The elders at RiverValley are committed to evaluate and respond to COVID-19 as things continue to change here in Oshkosh and surrounding areas. Because the virus is spiking here and the hospitals are full, we are going to change from encouraging mask wearing to requiring masks to be worn for participation in Sunday services starting on November 22nd.

We are committed to meeting together for a number of reasons:

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is

but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:23-25

- **We are called in scripture not to forsake meeting together.** **(Heb.10:25)** In a culture that is completely me-centric these teachings may feel strange, but we are called to be engaged with one another. We are called to encourage one another to consider how we can call each other to love and good work. The commitment is to one another, not to watch a video once a week. We believe the constant isolation is very hard on many people. We also believe that Satan loves to separate believers from the herd in order to attack them.
- **We believe that gathering as the church body is essential, and that God’s place is first in everything.** The Old Testament reminds us that God is always first. Whether that is the first fruits of your garden, the first of your flocks, etc. We believe that our commitment to Christ and His body is first above other activities. One RVC’er said it well, “We aren’t going to a restaurant if we aren’t going to church.”
- **We don’t believe the church shuts down ever.** Even though there is a pandemic, that doesn’t mean that the believers left here to live for God’s glory put that on hold for a year or so. We need to be on mission right now, wherever you are. If anything, the fact that some people die from this virus must call us to proclaim Christ. Being part of a local assembly is a great support and help in that.

We are going to require masks right now to slow the spread and show love for one another.

“If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions, for the sake of conscience. But if anyone says to you, “This is meat sacrificed to idols,” do not eat it, for the sake of that one who informed you and for the sake of conscience; Now by “conscience” I do not mean your own, but the other person’s; for why is my freedom judged by another’s conscience?” 1 Corinthians 10:27-29

- **We are going to require masks, because we want to do our best to protect people from getting the virus.** We know that the efficacy of masks has been questioned, but the vast majority of experts believe it has some benefits to slow the transmission of the virus. So regardless of the science that we don’t know, we can show our concern for others by doing what is thought to be the best deterrent.

around you. Therefore, wearing a mask helps those around you feel safer. Paul was willing to give up his freedom for the sake of others. New Testament scholar I. Howard Marshall once said, “Paul was so free that he was never in bondage to his emancipation.” You are free to believe that masks don’t help or that it’s an intrusion on your rights. However, it is important to remember that as Christians, we hold our personal rights loosely to show God's love by giving up personal freedom for the sake of others' concern.

- **Make your stand for the gospel, not your preferences.** Paul says, *“For though I am free from all people, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may gain more.”* The principle of not holding on to preferences so that you can win others to Christ is very biblical. We are not controlled by what others think, but right now some people perceive the freedom not to wear a mask with indifference to others getting sick. That’s a message we don’t need to perpetuate.
- **Wearing a mask here does not mean we are asking you to believe the whole COVID-19 narrative.** We know that some of you do not want to wear a mask, because you disagree with the narrative portrayed by the media. We know that a mask is not capable of keeping the microscopic virus out. However, a mask absolutely does alter the trajectory of your exhaled pathogens, especially when we sing.
- **It is not our intention to wear masks forever.** We will evaluate our condition here month by month. When we do not require masks anymore, there will need to be graciousness from those who want to continue wearing masks to those that do not.

This Sunday, November 15, we would appreciate it if you would wear a mask as you come in. The following Sunday, November 22, we will require one for entry and are asking you to please participate. The sooner we practice this the better! We know that you may have questions, need further clarification, or possibly have some disagreements. Feel free to email or talk in person to any of the elders, Pastor Dave, or Pastor Wyatt.

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availability. If we have five volunteers, for example, we are able to take fifteen kids minimum, depending on age, and possibly more. We do our best to have volunteers “on call” in case we reach our max and have more kids coming in. Please come with patience and flexibility as our volunteer availability changes based on COVID-19 exposure. At this time, we are still combining all age groups due to low volunteer availability and low kids attendance. As more children begin returning, we will begin to separate by age.

We have our junior volunteer program up and running for students in fifth grade through eighth grade (also offered to third through fourth grade based on maturity level and responsibility). If you have a student willing to serve in this way; please reach out, and we can work together to find the right classroom fit.

We are looking for volunteers who love the LORD and love children and can serve during services on Sunday morning. If you desire to serve God in this way, please connect with Tracy Fettner, RVC | kids and family Director, tracy.fettner@rvcoshkosh.com.

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PRAYER AND PRAISE

Sunday, November 29, will be our next Prayer and Praise night. We will make this one a Praise and Thanks evening, so mark your calendar, and plan to share a word of thanks to God for something He has done for you this year. We want most of the time to be you sharing what you want to thank God for this year.

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OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

Just a reminder that this Sunday, the 15th, is the last Sunday that you'll be able to bring your filled boxes if you haven't done so already. The filled boxes can be

If you haven't already packed your shoebox, now is the time to do so! If you need ideas on what to pack, check out the Operation Christmas Child's [gift suggestions](#). Once you've packed your box make sure the label that was included in your box is securely attached to your box(es), and you check the age group of the child on this label.

Operation Christmas Child is also asking that you please contribute \$9 for each box to cover the cost of processing, shipping, and Gospel materials. You can donate on their [website](#) - it's quick and convenient - or by mail.

No time to shop? Don't worry. You can [Build a Shoebox Online](#) in just a few minutes and personalize it with a photo and brief note.

Above all, please pray for the children who will receive your gifts that they will realize how much God loves them and that their hearts would be open to the Gospel.

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GIVING UPDATE:

YTD Giving 5/1/20 - 7/31/20

Actual: \$179,738.68

Budgeted: \$173,732

Weekly Giving: 11/2/20 - 11/8/20

\$12,911.12



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