



## **MASKS OPTIONAL STARTING JUNE 6<sup>TH</sup>, 2021**

If you are curious about our recent announcement regarding masks on our campus, here is some more background surrounding how we are responding as we continue navigating this pandemic season. We hope this helps provide a little more clarity and understanding:

Our primary concern during this pandemic has been and continues to be people's **safety**. That's why for the better part of last year, we were facilitating ministry and worship services fully online. We've navigated re-entry to in person gatherings at a cautious pace, following appropriate safety precautions given local cases and recommendations.

The state of CA is loosening restrictions starting on June 15th, so why did we choose June 6th? We're moving to make masks optional a few days sooner because we feel it is safe to do so. This is due to the decline in COVID cases locally, the increased availability of the vaccine, and recommendations and restrictions changing. We have operated within the local county recommendations throughout this pandemic and have determined this is the best response and timeline for our church.

We respect the choices that individuals will make regarding wearing masks, vaccination and gathering in person. People can decide for themselves what risks they are comfortable taking (decide to get a vaccine or not; and wear a mask or not; come in person or watch online.)

One thing we can all agree on is how polarizing this pandemic has been! We recognize how much division there is surrounding issues like masks and vaccination. We do not think it is wise to single out a group of people or create more opportunity for further division within the church and within our worship services and events. This is why we are choosing not to have sections for masked and unmasked people or rules for vaccinated and unvaccinated people. Next to prioritizing safety, unity is our goal. We are choosing the path that will lead to greater unity as a church body, while asking everyone to maintain respect and love for one another. Luckily, we have a large worship venue. We can continue to gather, while remaining spread out. The balcony will remain open for those who are looking for extra distance.

For those who are uncomfortable coming in person for any reason, we will continue to offer an online option. We've invested in streaming services live and providing people access to worship with us from home. This is important to us and we are committed to continue this format.

We recognize there is no one, winning solution that will please *all* people, but we feel this is what will be best for our church family at this time.

**If you have further questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to us directly by emailing our team at [info@fairoaks.church](mailto:info@fairoaks.church).**