

Subject: St. Mark's Lifts Masking Requirement as of April 1, 2022 based on CDC Guidelines

March 21, 2022

Beloved of God:

From the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic, St. Mark's has prioritized the effort to follow Jesus' Way of Love by caring for each other's health and safety, with particular attention to the most vulnerable among us. While it has not be easy, we have done a remarkable job of keeping each other safe and healthy over the past two years.

CDC developments: Recently, the CDC released new guidelines for county-by-county tracking of the Covid-19 risk levels. You can find them on this website [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov). These new risk levels consider a number of factors to create the risk level in a given county for each week.

Vestry Action: With the support of Bishop Michael Hunn, St. Mark's Vestry has decided to use of the CDC's county by county Community Covid-19 Risk Levels as a non-biased, scientific standard to guide our practices surrounding covid safety measures.

Beginning Friday April 1, 2022 St. Mark's will ease the mask restriction in public worship and other activities based on the new CDC county-by-county guidelines. Our St. Mark's Montessori School already uses these CDC guidelines, so this decision will bring our whole campus into alignment with a common standard.

Mask Friendly St. Mark's: While we are relaxing our masking requirement, we want to be clear that we remain a "Mask Friendly" Parish. We encourage all who prefer to wear masks to keep doing so and to continue other safety precautions as well. Our clergy and Vestry want to support all parishioners regardless of their mask use and thinking on the subject. We anticipate that many will continue to wear masks at church for the foreseeable future, and we want them to be able to do so with confidence and without any stigma or shame.

The Details:

- If the CDC level of risk in our county is **Green (Low)**, masks are optional for public worship and other activities, just as in our Montessori School.
- If the CDC level of risk in our county is **Yellow (Medium)**, masks will be optional but strongly encouraged in our public worship and other activities and in the St. Mark's Montessori Classrooms.
- If the CDC level of risk in our county is **Orange (High)**, masks will once again be required in public worship and on the St. Mark's Campus and in the St. Mark's Montessori Classrooms.

- No matter what the level of risk, we continue to encourage people to stay up-to-date with vaccines and booster doses as recommended by the CDC. We ask all who may feel ill to stay home and to follow CDC guidelines for monitoring symptoms, testing and quarantine.

We will announce Bernalillo County's risk level weekly in our Friday E-Messenger newsletter. We will prominently display the current risk level and recommendations at both of our main entrances to the building. Extra masks and hand sanitizing stations will continue to be available for those who need them.

We know that this change will come as a surprise to some and as a welcome change to others. Together our St. Mark's family will continue to demonstrate deep respect and loving care for one another as we support one another's health decisions. We respect the privacy of each person's health decisions and encourage people to make wise choices for their own health needs. Together, "We are Making Something Beautiful for God in our Neighborhood."

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call and speak with the rector Fr. Christopher McLaren (505) 262-22484, the Senior Warden Lucy Sinkular (703) 638-4286, or Junior Warden Laurel Cabral (505) 379-6664.

In God's Generous Love,

Fr. Christopher+
Rector St. Mark's

Lucy Sinkular
Senior Warden

Laurel Cabral
Junior Warden