



# RAINTREE

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## COMMUNITY CHURCH

### A Statement From the Elders July 3, 2020

Dear Raintree Family,

As most of you are already aware, the Jackson County Health Department has released an order that requires face coverings in public indoor and outdoor spaces, including places of worship. The exceptions to this order are children who are 0-4 years old, persons with medical conditions, mental health conditions, or disabilities that prevent a face covering. This is part of the Phase 2.5 Reopening Plan for Jackson County. You can read the full statement here: <https://www.jacksongov.org/1209/Face-Covering-Requirement>.

As an elder team, we value everyone's safety and we desire to be subject to the higher powers as it is clearly stated in Romans 13. However, it does not mean that is easy or enjoyable at times like these. As we prepare to gather on Sundays, please keep in mind that we are asking each person who attends Raintree Community Church to honor this order by wearing a mask upon entering the church building for all in-person worship gatherings (excluding those who fall under exemptions). We will continue to sit as families in the service and allow for social distancing between families.

This rule applies to all of those in Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, and Adult Bible Studies that take place at our church from Sunday through Saturday. However, if you are teaching the class, you can remove your face covering and remain six feet apart from those you are teaching. For your convenience, we will provide face coverings to those who need them. This rule applies to all of those in the corporate Sunday worship gathering. However, if you are on stage leading worship or preaching, you may remove your mask during that time. Otherwise, the face covering should be worn.

Our desire is for us to gather as a church in person through this season of difficulty! We do not want to cancel our live services and go back to a livestream only format. It has been glorious to worship with the body of Christ since May 24<sup>th</sup>, and we hope that will continue. We value each worship gathering and hope to continue meeting together.

If you or a family member feel that you need to stay home, we completely understand and respect your decision. We will continue to livestream our services on Facebook Live through our page. If anyone in your family is sick (including your children), we ask you to stay at home. This is one of the most loving things we can do to help each other during times where we gather as a church family.

We also fully realize that there is a considerable amount of debate on this issue. Therefore, it is possible for this issue to become a platform for division within the body and a distraction from worshipping the Lord together. Let us be both watchful and compassionate in our dealings with this issue and how we view one another. Let us extend the grace and mercy of Christ to one another in light of the grace and mercy that has been lavished upon us in the Gospel!

As we have stated before, God has brought us into these days, and He will bring us out. God has been deepening our dependence upon Him during this crisis in profound ways. Let's be known as a church who reflects a confidence in the Lord in how we respond to this. May we not give into fearfulness, but rest in God, who is our refuge and strength. May we not give into judgmentalism, but ask God for a wise and compassionate heart. We are profoundly thankful for you as a church body. You have continued to serve, give, and praise God through this crisis. We are looking forward to seeing you on Sunday, both in person and online. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. It is a privilege for us to serve the Lord and His church.

Your fellow servants,

The Elders at Raintree