

Update from the GCGCNY Covid-19 Response Team, Oct 17, 2022.

Dear brothers and sisters:

Thank God for his peace and grace amidst the difficulties we are facing in the pandemic.

Thank you for following all public health guidelines to control Covid. Thank you to everyone who have worked faithfully so that we could re-open for in-person meetings.

After careful consideration, **effective immediately, we highly recommend but not require wearing a mask whenever possible.** This is a change from the previous policy of requiring a mask except when eating or playing sports. The previous policy highly recommending but not requiring up to date vaccination against Covid remains unchanged.

In making this decision, we carefully weighed the pros and cons of requiring masking:

Pros of requiring masks:

- decrease Covid, colds and influenza spreading
- Covid may increase during the winter and we may have to restart mask mandate.
- some congregations have many elderly and immune compromised people who are more at risk

Cons of requiring masks:

- more distance and barrier in interpersonal social interactions. Cannot see face and visual cues
- most Omicron infections are very mild. Vaccination and previous infection give weak protection against new infection but strong protection against severe illness and death.
- removing the requirement helps people feel that life is getting closer to normal. May encourage more in person attendance at church and small groups
- difficult to justify when masks are not needed in most settings already such as mass transit, shopping, eating, airplane etc in which the risk is similar or higher than attending church or small groups. Most churches we know of have ended mask mandates. Masks remain required only in nursing and retirement homes, certain congregate settings and certain medical clinics and hospitals.

Please respect and love those who choose to wear a mask and those who don't.

We continue to highly recommend that everyone follow all current public health measures:

<https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/>

If you were exposed to Covid or have any symptoms, please take this self-assessment which will tell you what to do: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

If you have Covid or is a close contact, please follow these guidelines:

<https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-what-you-should-do/>

If you are ill, please do not come to meetings until you are better.

We will continue to monitor the course of the pandemic in the GTA closely and give further guidance as needed.

Church facilities are available now for booking for ministry use and for use by approved community partners.

Each congregation will decide whether to continue offering meetings virtually.

Peace and grace,

GCGCNY Covid-19 Response Team

TK – team lead and representing the church Board of Directors

Rev Chan – representing the church staff

Sylvia – representing the English congregation

Queenie – representing the Cantonese congregation

Edwin – representing the Mandarin congregation

Felicity – representing the Children congregation

新冠肺炎應變小組新訊(2022/10/17)

親愛的弟兄姊妹：

面對疫情的艱難，但願神的平安與恩典常與大家同在。

多謝大家跟隨公共衛生指引以控制疫情，多謝每一位忠心事奉讓教會得以重開的。

經小心考量後，之前我們要求**凡進入教會的**必須配戴口罩，只在進行運動或飲食時則可暫時除下口罩的規則改為**建議配戴口罩，即時生效**。之前建議大家接種疫苗維持不變。

作出這個決定，是基於權衡下列因素後作出的：

支持配戴口罩的論點：

- 減低散播新冠肺炎、感冒及流感的風險
- 新冠肺炎感染率在冬季或許再次上升，屆時或要回復必須配戴口罩的規則
- 個別堂會有很多長者，及因不直接種疫苗的受感染高危群

反對配戴口罩的論點：

- 阻礙看見面貌和表情，阻礙人際間的溝通
- 新的變種病毒症狀輕微，而接種疫苗及曾受感染雖然可以減低重症或死亡的風險，但無阻受感染機會
- 移除必須戴口罩的規則讓人感到更接近回復正常生活，有助促進信徒參加實體教會及小組聚會
- 現時在安老院、老人設施、某些醫療場所仍維持必須配戴口罩的規則。而大多數比教會更高危的公共場所則已經移除必須戴口罩的規則，並且有很多教會也同樣移除了這規則，繼續這規則變得較難接受

無論配戴口罩與否，請尊重各自的選擇和彼此關愛。

我們繼續鼓勵大家按政府指引做好防禦措施：<https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/>

若你接觸了新冠患者或出現新冠病徵，請按這連結作自我檢測，網站會按檢測結果作指引。
<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

若你感染新冠或是密切接觸者，請按連結跟隨指引。
<https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-what-you-should-do/>

若你感到不適，請在好轉之前暫時停止出席實體聚會。

我們將密切留意大多市疫情發展，並按需要調整指引。

教會設施已開放予教會事工及合作伙伴申請使用。

各堂將按需要決定是否維持網上聚會的安排。

願恩惠與平安常與眾人同在。

應變小組啟

應變小組成員包括：

黃達琨執事 TK (董事會代表及應變小組組長)

陳訓民牧師 Fanco (教牧代表)

高譚綺萍姊妹 Queenie (粵語事工代表)

葛非執事 Edwin (國語事工代表)

司徒靜姬姊妹 Sylvia (英語事工代表)

陳張筱敏執事 Felicity (兒童事工代表)