

The Rev. Nikolaus Combs, Priest in Charge
Trinity Episcopal Church, Torrington, CT
8/15/2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and Peace to you in Jesus Christ our Lord. I hope that everyone has been able to both avoid lightning bolts, falling trees, and sweltering heat - and find some space to reconnect with the love and goodness of God.

I have a special request for those of us who participate in the service at church on Sunday morning. Some of our congregation have expressed serious concern over our community's mask hygiene - we have some among our number who would really like to join in the live service but feel they cannot do so without taking unnecessary risk. The guidelines from our Bishops and the wider the ECCT clearly stipulate that face coverings be worn **at all times** while indoors, no one over the age of 65 participate in live gatherings, and a number of other details that are spelled out in a document I am happy to share with anyone who might be curious.

I, (Fr. Nik), along with our Jr. Warden Dr. Jessica Magda, and Sr. Warden Dr. Roger Coutant, ask that you keep your face covered up for the entire time you are indoors, including while you sit at your socially-distant pew. Of course, an exception is to be made for leading the congregation in prayer or preaching.

To be as honest and transparent as possible, I would like to be upfront about the fact that just like we do not actually bar entry to anyone over the age of 65 who comes to participate, there will be no enforcer chasing down anyone who is unable or unwilling to comply with full-time indoor mask use. We are simply asking those present to be mindful of and caring for those of us who take these precautions seriously, and who feel that to go out safely and responsibly. I say this realizing just how hot, wet, and uncomfortable face coverings are, especially right now in the heat of summer. I would also like to remind everyone that going barefoot 1) helps your body cool and 2) there is no data suggesting that COVID-19 is transmitted through the feet.

Obviously, people who currently worship from home with A/C, coffee, and their tablet or computer are free to continue to participate any way they wish.

If you have any further questions and concerns, please feel free to reach out to myself, Roger, or Jessica.

Faithfully,
Fr. Nik Combs