



# Presbytery of San Gabriel

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Rev. Wendy S. Tajima, Executive Presbyter

Rev. Ally Lee, Stated Clerk for Administration

Elder Steve Salyards, Stated Clerk for Judicial Process

July 29, 2022

Dear Congregations of the San Gabriel Valley Presbytery,

You may have heard that the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health considered reinstating the indoor masking mandate, but decided against it. However, the Presbytery Executive Commission discussed the current surge of the Omicron variant, and how it has had a widespread impact on our church members, even those who have been vaccinated or have had COVID already. Based on the high reported positivity rate of 16.6%, the evidence that the now-dominant BA.5 subvariant is evading immunity from vaccines or prior Omicron infections, and the studies that show almost 25% of infected people have lingering “long COVID” effects, we want to protect our church members, especially those who are vulnerable to severe sickness.

Therefore, the Executive Commission of the San Gabriel Presbytery strongly recommends, even urges, its congregations to follow the “best practices” of the LACDPH regarding worshipping communities. This advice can be found at <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/BestPractices/communitiesoffaith/>.

These best practices, and Executive Commission guidelines, include:

- ✓ Continue on-line worship options.
- ✓ Have sign-in sheets for people visiting the church campus.
- ✓ Strongly encourage universal indoor masking, preferably with medical-grade masks and respirators (e.g., N95, KN95, KF94), regardless of vaccination status. Churches should have disposable masks on hand in case visitors do not have them.
- ✓ All employees must be provided masks and respirators at no cost to the employee, whether or not the masks are required for work.
- ✓ Singing (choirs, hymn singing, etc.) continues to be especially risky. Ensure singers are masked and vaccinated, and if possible positioned closer to locations where the air is exiting the room.
- ✓ Continue to instruct visitors not to visit the church campus if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or if they have recently tested positive. Consider asking for proof of vaccination or negative COVID tests within 2 days (if PCR) or 1 day (if antigen) of attending indoor services.
- ✓ Take extra care serving food and beverages. It is strongly recommended that food and drink be served and consumed outdoors only.

- ✓ Whenever possible, hold services outdoors. If indoors, use assigned and/or distanced seating and establish procedures to prevent crowding as attendees wait to enter, exit, or visit the restroom or any confined space.
- ✓ Make sure your AC system is in good, working order, and if possible add portable high-efficiency air cleaners, fans, or open windows and doors to increase airflow. If using fans, position them on one side of the room and direct them to blow the air outward, not inward.
- ✓ Encourage handwashing.

Every week we hear of church members, even those who have been vaccinated, testing positive for COVID and struggling with the symptoms of the disease. Please be careful for the sake of your members, visitors, and staff.

If you have questions about this guidance, please contact the Presbytery office at (626) 614-5964 or email [presby@sangabpres.org](mailto:presby@sangabpres.org).

Grace and peace,  
Presbytery Executive Commission