

## German Lutheran Trinity Church Face Mask Guidelines

Current Victorian face mask guidelines <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/face-masks-vic-covid-19> (last accessed 2nd November 2020) are:

- *All Victorians must wear a fitted face mask when they leave home, no matter where they live. As restrictions ease and movement increases, the effectiveness of a face mask is even more important.*
- *You must wear a fitted face mask that covers the nose and mouth. This means that face shields, bandanas, or scarves or loose snoods, loose Buffs® or loose neck gaiters on their own will no longer be considered a sufficient face covering.*
- *There are a number of lawful excuses for not wearing a face mask.*

Lawful excuses that are more likely to occur in the church are:

- Infants and children under the age of 12 years.
- A person who is affected by a relevant medical condition, including problems with their breathing, a serious condition of the face, a disability or a mental health condition.

We wish not only to comply with the guidelines of the Victorian DHHS but also minimise the risk for attending church members church staff/volunteers.

For its COVID-Safe plan, the church sets its own standards as to how to manage situations where church members have a lawful reason for not wearing a mask. Whilst the church board understands some members of the church community are reluctant to wear masks, there is a need to balance this personal imposition against:

- potential risks to church members in at risk categories (e.g. older age, specific pre-existing medical conditions) where case fatality rates are higher
- ensuring government requirements are implemented
- potential reputational risk the church as a publicly noted source of infection, should community transmission become more common and a cluster emerge from the church.

For these reasons, consistent with current DHHS guidelines, a mask must be worn at all times during church services.

If a person has a "relevant medical condition" that prevents them from wearing a mask, they should present a medical certificate (from their GP or medical specialist) stating their medical condition prevents them from wearing a mask. In this case, parishioners can be offered the following options:

- use of a face shield to participate in the indoor church service or,
- participating in the outdoor church service