Good Afternoon Pine Ridge Family!

“Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.” Psalm 115:1 [KJV]

This afternoon I would like to deal on masks. Yes, a touchy subject.

Maybe this week you saw a new directive from the Elkhart Health Department. It is in light of the jump in COVID cases in the county. Some got from that statement that there was a requirement on mask wearing for Elkhart County. It did not. It only recommends them. If the county requires them in the future, then we will follow our biblical mandate, and the policy we have had at PBRC, and obey this regulation.

Now to leave legal considerations and to take up Christian morals. We also at Pine Ridge have not required masks. We have recommended them. This has caused a very uncomfortable situation. Because many have decided not to wear those masks while in the church, many of our more vulnerable brothers and sisters are not coming. They do not feel safe, and they are beginning to assume that the people who do feel safe and do not wear masks do not care about them. Phil. 2:1-5 *“Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus”*

How are we loving our brothers and sisters in Christ? You may believe that it is all “bunk,” you may believe that you are building up “herd immunity” and yes, we have liberty. *“But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak”* I Cor. 8:9. In the end result, we are preventing some dear believer from joining us because we are requiring them to behave like us. But are they then causing us to be like them? *“Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.”* Paul is putting no such requirement on us as he accepted in I Cor. 8:13, when we choose to wear a mask. We wear it out of love for the brethren. John 15:12 *"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.”*

And, my friends, it is only for an hour and a half.

In Christ, our Lord…

Pastor EA

Roman 14:7-8 “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, *we are the Lord's.”* [KJV]