

## *Offended in the Time of Corona*

It's difficult to have a plan for every contingency. And as is often said, "hind sight is 20/20". So, to me the most prudent course of action is to err on the side of caution. Especially when the goal is to protect those you care about.

This *Time of Corona* presents unexpected and sometimes confusing opportunities to decide what to do. Last Friday about 15 minutes before services, for example, I became aware that among people who needed to be present someone had a possible exposure to someone with Covid. They were vaccinated. And so was I. The likelihood that anything would be spread was small, and yet, it preyed on my mind and I knew would distract me from prayer and leading our community. Out of an abundance of caution I decided to wear a mask and asked everyone to do the same that night. Most complied as the ushers made this request. But there were several who came to Temple who were offended and left. I do not know who they were as it happened while I was on the *bima*.

Part of me is offended that they were offended! After all we are just trying to keep everyone safe! Another part of me understands that for many they are tired of the masks and just don't want to deal with them. The strip is open. Restaurants are open. The Golden Knights had huge numbers of folks in attendance during the play offs. Newspaper headlines have declared, "Vegas is Back!" Covid is over!

Except it's not.

Our county is about 42 percent vaccinated. The new Delta variant is becoming dominant. Clark County is still encountering nearly 1500 cases of Covid over the holiday weekend. And I am still getting calls to minister to Congregants whose loved ones are dealing with serious cases of the virus. These are the bits and pieces of information I hear about that give me pause to consider what to do. And yes, we have a wonderful Covid committee to advise, but sometimes at that moment, a decision has to be made. And I choose, an abundance of caution.

The world is divided now between "those who are vaccinated" and "those who are not." Except, we live on *one* planet. We are so fortunate to live in a country where everyone who wants a vaccine can get one. There are still far too many

places in this world that not only lag behind us in vaccinating its population or are unable to purchase and deliver a vaccine to its population.

And while this essay may seem like a rant on the importance of vaccination, it really is about something else. Not everything has to be politicized or the subject of offence. There are sadly, a myriad of things that do fit into this category! But for the things that merely are an annoyance, like wearing masks, let's have a bit more patience. For the *Time of Corona* has not run out, and masks are with us for a while more. And when this time runs out, there will be another challenge that will present itself. In fact, there already are such challenges; the environment, race relations, crime, education, crumbling infrastructure, and I guess I will add "world peace" for good measure. Trying to solve them is not offensive, but yes, at times, it is annoying. Out of an abundance of caution and concern for each other, let's never stop trying. For behind every mask is a human being who is part of our world.

*Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people,*

*But love your neighbor as yourself. (Leviticus 19:18)*

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