

**Small Talk – August 2 2021**  
**By Michael Small**

When raising our son, we always deeply and consistently instilled in him that he could always make his choice. And by making that choice he also needed to take responsibility for all the choices that were made. Though, we as parents would not always agree with his choice, if able, we would honor the choices made. Also, in this country, with the ability to choose is also the mantra being lifted up by many to “protect” one’s freedom to do as they wish and choose, and dare I say, too many times without responsibility and accountability for the choices made.

While in college I remember a professor saying to we the students, “You can do anything you want, even murder someone – it is your choice. ***BUT YOU ALWAYS MUST TAKE FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR CHOICES!***” There is the rub – taking responsibility for choices and actions made. Sometimes there must be repair!

All of us have had a rough 18 or so months learning to live with a pandemic – Covid-19. Many of us have chosen to be vaccinated – following the science. We made choices and have been responsible for them. As of this morning only 58.9% in Minnesota have received 1 + doses of vaccination and only 46.5% of Cass County have received 1 + doses of vaccination.<sup>1</sup> (I am proud to say that probably 99% of the congregation has been fully vaccinated!)

Question to those who have chosen not to be vaccinated – are you truly responsible for your choices and the actions you are making? Of those not vaccinated, I know of those who are careful – they are fully masked when in the public and spend most of their time at home, isolated from others. But we know that cases of Covid-19 have risen in every state because of the highly infectious Delta Variation. Those who are being infected are from the non-vaccinated population. If you choose not to be vaccinated, I hope that you will stay at home and when needing to go out into the public, do so, ***ONLY FULLY MASKED!***

Why get vaccinated? Until most of us are vaccinated, Covid-19 will continue to infect and mutate into potentially more dangerous variations. There is even the possibility it could mutate beyond the restraints of the current vaccines. Get vaccinated for the health and well-being of the whole. That is why I chose early on to be vaccinated – it was for you! It was taking a very small risk for the good of all.

For those who are willing to die on the altar of reckless freedom and irresponsible choices (and tragically some are dying) I urge you to take on one more mantra – ***I – WE ARE IN RELATIONSHIP!*** Frankly, no one is an island unto themselves alone. Every choice you make affects others. And yes, it always takes a village to raise our children.

Townships, communities, cities, states, nations are all built on the assumption that we are always, in some ways, in relationship. We are families, neighbors, clusters of like-

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics from <https://covidactnow.org/us/minnesota-mn/?s=21291052>

minded folk. We choose to be a part of communities – church, state, non-profit organizations and of course we are born into families – for better or worse.

As a part of humanity, let's make good choices for self and for the whole. Let us choose life, and life abundant. Let us make healthy and whole relationships that cause us to learn and grow together. May we discover new friends through the communities where we live – and may our communities always welcome the stranger no matter who they are!

I urge you to become blessing, and not curse!

In the spirit and agape love of Jesus, Michael

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