



October 31, 2018

### ***THE MASKS WE WEAR***

When I was a kid, putting on costumes and going out for trick or treat on Halloween, I sometimes wore the stiff plastic masks with the rubber band around the back. Those masks dug into your face and the rubber band was constantly precarious. One year, I was excited to get one of the premier latex masks that goes over the whole head. It's a much better effect, but it became so hot in there that I had to lift it up between every house to breathe the crisp fall air.

Masks on Halloween are great because they never become comfortable. They are strictly for one-night use. It's the masks that become comfortable that we have a hard time putting aside. These masks are not of goblins or celebrities of Halloween. These are the less-than-honest versions of ourselves that we put forward, hoping that they are more acceptable and likable. These versions of ourselves hide our insecurities and embarrassments.

Now, I'm not saying that we should tear off these masks and walk around with complete vulnerability to everyone we meet. What I hope is that all of us will find the places that are safe, where we can trust that we are accepted and loved, and we can risk being honest and real. Those are holy places, where we see God.

I have been in many conversations that were skating pleasantly along in safe ways until one person took a risk, and shared a part of life that was difficult. Time after time, this single act of honesty allows everyone else to be honest about their own fears, mistakes, and unsolvable dilemmas. A holy and beloved community grows when we take off our masks.

I'll see you in church.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt".

Rev. Dr. Matthew Wooster  
Senior Minister