

ECCNL Covid-19 Task Force : Guidelines for Resumption of Onsite Services
Congregational Memo 5/20/2020

The following guidelines have been developed by the ECCNL Covid-19 Task Force in preparation for return to face-to-face worship at ECCNL. They are in addition to, and giving further detail to, the “Re-Open Guidelines” developed by Pastor Kevin, dated 5/30/2020. This does not address the issue of when we will resume onsite worship; timing of reopening will be determined by church leadership after prayerful consideration of multiple factors.

Online worship will continue to be offered throughout this process; your safety is our primary concern, and until you are comfortable returning to face-to-face worship, we encourage you to stay home and participate online.

Before leaving home for church:

- 1) **PLEASE STAY HOME** and **worship online** if you are ill, especially with symptoms of Covid-19. These symptoms primarily include **fever, cough, or shortness of breath**. Other symptoms can include chills, chest discomfort, body aches, new onset of headaches, or new onset of loss of taste or smell.
- 2) **PLEASE STAY HOME** and **worship online** if you or a member of your household has been diagnosed with Covid-19 within the past 14 days or have been in close contact with someone ill with Covid-19 within the past 14 days.
- 3) **PLEASE STRONGLY CONSIDER STAYING HOME** and **worshiping online** if you are at higher risk for severe illness from Covid-19. These risk factors include:
 - People aged **65 years and older**
 - People who live in a nursing home or **long-term care facility**
 - People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, including **chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, serious heart conditions, immune system problems, severe obesity, diabetes, chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, liver disease.**

When you do come to church:

- 1) Please bring a cloth face mask for each member of your family (age 2 years and older) to wear, if possible. If you don't have masks, some donated ones will be available at church for your use.

***Note on use of face masks:** despite some controversy on this issue, the science is clear that wearing a face mask decreases respiratory droplet and aerosol emissions from the wearer – including from speech, cough, sneeze, breathing, and singing. This decreases the risk of a coronavirus-infected person, who is wearing a mask, from transmitting the virus to you. Keep in mind that when you wear a cloth mask it does not protect you from getting infected, but it protects others from catching the virus from you. Wearing the mask does not change the need for you to continue social distancing.

The masks should be placed and adjusted on the wearer's face, then **left alone**, until removed for the day. The masks then must be carefully dropped in a receptacle/bag without touching the outside of the mask. Finally, the user must then sanitize their hands.

It should be stressed, therefore, that wearing a face mask is not for your benefit, but **out of love and concern** for those around you.

We **strongly recommend** that face masks be worn at all times when we gather in person, for everyone age 2 years and older. There may be areas at church reserved as “safe zones” for the most vulnerable and most concerned, where wearing a mask will be required.

- 2) Please remember to keep 6-foot distancing, cover your cough or sneeze, wear your mask, and avoid touching your eyes/nose/mouth. Avoid handshakes/hugs/elbow bumps. Avoid touching door handles, doorknobs, light switches. Avoid congregating, especially in the entries/lobbies/aisles.
- 3) Use hand sanitizer when entering and leaving church. Take a sanitizer wipe with you to wipe the top of the pew ahead of where you will be sitting.

Church Facility

To help ensure your safety, you will notice some changes in how we are using our building, such as:

- 1) We will be following the measures already mentioned in Pastor Kevin's guidelines re: hand sanitizer/sanitizer-wipe stations at all entrances, use of alternate entrances etc.
- 2) All loose items and papers will be removed from the pews, entryways, lobbies, and Information Desk such as bulletins, hymnals, magazines, sign-up sheets, booklets, children's' activity bags, offering plates, friendship pads, pens, pencils.
- 3) All interior doors being used will be propped open, as much as possible.
- 4) All areas not being used for worship (such as the Kitchen, all of the basement & Sunday School rooms, Resource room, Youth Room and the Gym) will be closed, to avoid unnecessary covid cleaning.
- 5) Hand sanitizer/sanitizer wipe stations be placed outside & inside the elevator if it is to be used.
- 6) Signs for the various worship areas will be placed to display their designated use (Families with Young Children, Most At Risk etc.)
- 7) The drinking fountains will be unavailable, in compliance with MN Dept. of Health guidelines.

Worship and Fellowship Issues

Again, for your safety, we will be making some changes in how we *do* Worship. Some of these changes will include:

- 1) Greeters may be inside or outside the building but will stand 6 feet "out of your way" to wave and voice their welcome to you, and they will be wearing face masks. It will be difficult but remember to not shake their hand! Also, either they will open the doors for you, or the doors will already be propped open.
- 2) The seating plans and worship area plans as outlined in Pastor Kevin's guidelines will be followed.
- 3) The State of MN Governor's Executive Order at the time of reopening, regarding any maximum occupancy restrictions, will be followed.
- 3) We will not be passing the offering plates but will have a "retiring offering."
- 4) Communion will also look different. We will not be passing the communion elements down the pews or having other traditional methods of distribution. Details yet to be determined, but we will probably be using individually wrapped servings of the elements.
- 5) No refreshments (coffee/tea/water/snacks, etc.) will be available for now.
- 6) No congregational meals/meetings will be held before, after (or during) services.
- 7) Congregational Singing may also look different, and the details will be forthcoming. The singing portion of the service will be at the end, and you will be given the opportunity to leave at that time if you wish.
- 8) When you arrive at church, please do not linger to talk in the entries or lobbies, but proceed directly to your seat and visit there. After the service, you will be ushered out, one row at a time. Again, please do not gather for fellowship in the aisles or entryways but proceed directly outside for extended conversations!

Respectfully,

ECCNL Covid-19 Task Force (Doctors Tim Swanson & Dave Swanson and Nurses Judy Kulset & Jeanette Ardoff)