

Give Thanks, and Anticipate Being Together!

Our worship together in the building last fall was “paused” because of the November surge of COVID-19 cases and deaths. But cases now have decreased, vaccines are becoming available, and we anticipate being together again in our church building!

We also anticipate the ongoing ways we can care for one another as we follow the MN Dept. of Health safety and health protocols that we apply to our indoor worship. Following the protocols will also encourage our friends to return to the building for worship if they have felt reluctant to be in groups. Everyone’s compliance keeps everyone’s safety and comfort in mind. We are thankful for these concrete ways to prevent illness, keep us healthy, and respect one another:

1. ***Stay Home if you are feeling sick, have any of the COVID-19 symptoms, or have been exposed:***
 - Cough, fever, shortness of breath, body aches and fatigue, loss of smell and taste, nausea and diarrhea..._
 - Stay home if you have been exposed to anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or anyone who has tested positive to the virus in the last 2 weeks.

2. ***General guidelines to prevent spread of COVID-19*** that we will continue to follow as we come together:
 - **Wear a mask**
 - **Keep at least 6 feet apart (including not “clustering” around the doors when we leave the building)**
 - **Wash hands thoroughly and use hand sanitizer**
 - **Disinfect surfaces that are touched**

3. ***What you can expect as we come together for worship (a review for those who came in October/November, and new for others)***
 - God will be present with us, and will teach us new things as followers of Jesus who care for one another in the midst of a pandemic! We will worship God together, though it may “look different” from what we are used to.
 - ***When we arrive:***
 - Doors will open at 9:45 a.m.
 - We will be welcomed by a team of people who will encourage us: They will ask us to look at and respond (no / yes) to the list of Health Screening Questions to keep us safe (listed above and posted by the door, including “*stay home if you are not feeling well.*”)
Alert: People coming to the building with COVID-19 symptoms will be asked to leave rather than expose others to the virus.

- Though there will not be handshakes and hugs, we can “touch our own hands together” with the hand sanitizer stations provided at each door.
- Team members will help us find a place to sit in the sanctuary (spaces marked in the pews to give social distancing).

➤ ***When we are in the building:***

* Instead of passing offering plates we can deposit donations in a container in the narthex. Attendance pads will not be used, or bulletins. Hymnals and Bibles are stored for now. There is a disinfecting team to serve and protect us before and after worship as viruses can stay on surfaces.

- Watch indicators on the floor helping us keep 6 feet apart.
- Bring coats with you to the sanctuary.
- Worship materials will be on screens, rather than using hymnals, Bibles, and bulletins.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be by all the doors for us to use.
- Congregational singing: This can propel the virus into the air around us. But we can worship in other ways, including soft humming.
- Sorry that we will not have coffee and treats.
- Restrooms: Signs will be posted about 2 people in the room at a time.

➤ ***When we leave the building***

- If you visit with people outside the building, please respect social distancing, avoid “clustering” of people outside the door, and continue to wear your mask. *The reason: we seek to care for one another.*
- Reflect on what God has said during worship rather than being frustrated about the changes you experienced,
- Focus on giving thanks for *what we can do.*

4. ***We continue to need God’s help to encourage us in the grief we feel about the losses and changes because of the pandemic. But there also is hope for the future as we pray for healing and protection, vaccine distribution, and a gradual return to a “new normal” when the pandemic will be contained. Thank God for His work among us!***

BCC Health Professionals Ministry Team, 2/25/21