

First Baptist Church
COVID-19 Preparedness Plan
6/23/2020

Pray for wisdom, clarity, and discernment as we strive to provide a safe and secure worship experience.

First Baptist Church of Bemidji currently offers an online service, and *two* indoor services. *We will periodically offer an outdoor special service.* In an effort to promote the health and safety of our congregation, please observe the following. There are no options for childcare/nursery available at this time. Children's church is available online only.

All leadership, staff, greeters, ushers, must be trained regarding COVID-19 policies, procedures, practices, and protocols.

If you have questions or concerns you may contact one of the Plan Administrators: Tyrone Clark, Lee Fratzke, or Chris Godding.

Social Distancing:

- Occupancy will be reduced to 25% max capacity, which is no more than 70 in the sanctuary and 137 in the gym/fellowship hall.
- Gatherings (indoor and outdoor) are limited to no more than 250 people.
- In order to reduce contact, please do not hug, handshake, or hang out before, during, or after services.

Singing: The CDC tells us singing and loud speech increase the risk of transmission, therefore:

- Wear a mask while singing. *Or*
- Stay at least 12 feet away from others. *Or*
- Sing quietly to yourself.
- Our worship team will maintain at least 12 feet of distance between members of different households.

Doorways:

- *We will post screening questions near the doors.*
- We will prop the doors open to prevent contact.
- Greeters/security personnel will always be near the door but observe a distance of at least 6 feet from others. We will have designated entrances, exits, and lane markers.
- Please remain at least 6 feet from other households or individuals.
- Please do not congregate near the doorways.

Seating:

- We have adjusted seating rows to accommodate the required social distancing.
- Please keep at least 3 empty seats between individuals (unless part of the same family).
- We will use ushers to dismiss congregants in order to facilitate social distancing.
- For outdoor services please park in every other stall, not immediately next to each other.
- If you choose to sit outside your vehicle, please maintain at least 6 feet of distance away from others of different households.

Hygiene/Sanitation:

- **Sanctuary:**
 - Hand sanitizer and tissues are readily available throughout the church.
 - Water fountains are closed.
 - Hymnals, pens, and other items have been removed from the seatbacks.
 - We welcome you to wear a mask, but do not require it at this time.
 - We will not use the ceiling fans as they can contribute to the spread of germs.

- **Restrooms:**
 - Please do not congregate in the restrooms.
 - *We have opened all stalls and sinks. Please make sure to maintain 6 feet of social distance.*
 - Restrooms now have automatic paper towel dispensers and the trash cans are near the door to allow for you to use a paper towel to open the door.
- **Offering:** We encourage you to continue to give online or via mail.
 - Indoor service: Offering buckets are available as you enter the sanctuary.
 - Outdoor service: We will post ushers at the exit of the drive-in service. Ushers will use the offering buckets with poles to reduce contact.
- **Communion:**
 - For indoor services we will post elders/deacons near the entrance to distribute the elements for you to hold until time to partake.
 - For outdoor services we will post elders/deacons at the entrance. These people will be wearing gloves and a mask. Please pull up and tell him how many people in your car will be taking communion. He will give you individual communion packets to hold until time for communion.

Additional Precautions:

- *Please conduct a health screening each time prior to entering the church facility.*
- If you are not feeling well or have symptoms of coughing, sneezing, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, sore throat, muscle aches, headache, loss of smell or taste, please stay home. (even if you think it is just a cough or just allergies)
- If someone in your household has symptoms, please stay home.
- If you appear ill, you will be asked to go home for the safety of yourself and others
- If you become ill, please call the church at 444-6556 so we can pray for you and alert others who may have been exposed. We will protect your privacy and not share your name without your permission.

“At risk” congregants:

- If you are in the “at risk” category, we encourage you to remain at home and attend our services online or attend the outdoor service while remaining in your car.
- “At risk” includes people of age 65 or older, or those with underlying health issues such as, diabetes, compromised immune systems, heart conditions, asthma, chronic lung disease, obesity, kidney disease, and liver disease, as well as those living in a nursing home or long-term care facility.

Special Events (weddings, funerals, meetings, Bible studies, etc.): (In addition to the above)

- *We will meet with people involved (ushers, pallbearers, wedding party, etc.) to address the above practices.*
- *We will have an elder or deacon present during the event to help provide guidance regarding this policy.*
- *Food is not allowed. At this time we do not have the space to accommodate for offering a meal.*

Above all, please treat each other with love and respect. Just because you may be comfortable bending these rules, does not mean others are. Please respect their wishes.

This plan is subject to change, we appreciate your flexibility.

All changes since 5/28/2020 are printed in italics. Last updated: 6/23/2020.