

Church Services in a Covid-19 World

Where we are and where we are headed in opening the church for services

After being bombarded by the media for several months about the Coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19), it is understandable that people would be concerned. We wanted to let our church community know what we are doing and planning at Faith Covenant Church and answer some questions that are frequently asked of staff.

We are praying. We know that God is in control. So, we encourage you to join us in asking for God's protection of families across the world, and for God to bring an end to the spread of this disease. Pray with us for God's healing of those who are infected, for God's peace for the victims and their families, and open doors for the Good News of the gospel to help those, who are in the midst of this trial, to connect with Jesus.

We are taking steps on campus. Our campus is regularly cleaned, and we will continue to focus on making sure frequently touched surfaces like door handles are sanitized. We are readying our facility to provide live Sunday services in a Covid-19 world. The furniture in the gathering area has been removed and the coffee shop has been cleaned and closed. Face coverings and hand sanitizing stations have been placed at all of the entrances. In addition, Covid-19 tracking sheets are being filled out at each of these stations to track who has been in our building on any given day as we need to be able to trace contacts if someone who has recently been here suddenly contracts the virus. We have also partitioned off the upstairs from the downstairs and the children's wing from the main lobby.

We take our church community's health seriously. As a result, worship will be very different when we resume live services. We are promoting common-sense preventive actions for our volunteers, our staff and our entire church community. If you, or anyone in your family are not feeling well, please stay home. If someone arrives sick or becomes sick, we will separate them from others and ask they be sent home as soon as possible. We will alert local health officials about large increases in staff absenteeism, particularly, if absences appear due to respiratory illnesses, like the common cold or flu, which have symptoms similar to the Coronavirus.

Reservations will be required to attend live services which begin Sept 20. They can be made on Realm or if you do not have internet access you can call the church office at (952) 890-3110 and leaving a message by 11:59pm the Wednesday prior to the service. Doing this helps us in two ways. First, since we can only run at 50% capacity, it helps us to match attendance to our reduced capacity. And, second, all of the required Covid -19 screening and tracing information is collected at the time of reservation. This means no bottle necks on Sunday mornings when you come to worship.

All worship participants will be required to wear face coverings and to sanitize their hands when they come in the door. There will be no bulletins, or connect cards. There will also be no information desk, welcome table, coffee shop, or children's and nursery programming.

Once you enter the worship center, you will notice that every other row is roped off so it can't be used. Likewise, the center seats of the remaining rows have seats roped off as well. The ushers will greet you at the door, ask how many are in your party, and show you to your seats (you will not be able to choose seats). We will seat from the front of the worship center to the rear. All of these changes reinforce social distancing and limit excess movement up and down the aisles.

Upon conclusion of the service, the ushers will dismiss you from the rear of the worship center to the front.

Will we sing? In spite of all of the changes that had to be made to function in the current environment, it is important that our services continue to glorify God and provide a meaningful worship experience for the participants. Singing is an important part of this. While we will wear face coverings, we will continue to sing to the glory of our heavenly father.

What about things like communion, and greeting one another? For the time being, we will serve prepackaged Communion cups. Staff and volunteers will continue wearing gloves when prepping Communion. If you feel uncomfortable participating in this, please feel free to opt out.

Staff and volunteers are being asked not to use handshakes and hugs. We will be assessing these things on a regular basis and taking other measures as necessary.

How can I support our ministries and missionaries? Many at Faith already give their gifts and offerings through electronic means. If you would like to give your gifts online, you can do so at: faithcovenant.org, you can also give through Realm, or you may text your gifts to: give FCC 73256. If you would still like to give your gifts onsite, offering drop boxes have been installed at the exits. Simply drop your gifts into the secure box.

What if I am not comfortable returning at this time? Worship with us online. There is great value in physically gathering together, which is why Hebrews 10:24-25 tells us, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." But when unable to physically attend, watch us online on our YouTube Channel. Our channel is also accessible from our website (faithcovenant.org) or through Realm.

Thank you for your continued patience and support as we continue to work through this very challenging time. Hope to see you soon.