



COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN

THE PRESENT SITUATION

In a word, the present situation we find ourselves in is unclear. This is true both of the governmental guidelines we are receiving and the actual threat level of COVID-19 currently.

Regarding governmental guidelines, federal and state guidelines don't always line up. Both have shifted themselves a number of times. Furthermore, there's disagreement among the federal judiciary and state legislature about how binding these directives are for houses of worship. Unclear is the right word.

Regarding the actual threat level of COVID-19 currently, we hear reports that our country has flattened the curve of new infections, greatly reducing the threat of overwhelming the healthcare system. We also hear reports of the latent threat the virus still poses and the likelihood of a second outbreak. People are still dying from the virus, yet the death rate is decreasing. Again, the word that comes to mind is unclear.

All this means that different perceptions of the threat have arisen—not only in our government, but also among neighbors, family, and friends. Even brothers and sisters in our own congregation have legitimate, differing views. How do we move forward wisely?

THE HEART BEHIND OUR RESPONSE

We want to gather as a whole church as soon and as safely as possible. The challenge we want to navigate well is to figure out what “soon” and “safe” mean in an unclear situation.

We believe the way forward is **to focus on practices most widely acknowledged** as beneficial to community health, and then to **allow freedom on practices less widely acknowledged** as beneficial. As we make this distinction, we will do so in consultation with all applicable guidelines set forth, while recognizing these are not legally binding directives.

Presently, the most widely acknowledged practices include quarantining sick or particularly vulnerable portions of the population, conducting frequent health checks of those gathering with others, washing hands and sanitizing spaces frequently, maintaining appropriate physical distance, and making appropriate use of facemasks. These may change with time.

We believe focusing on the right practices will allow us to navigate wisely both the reality of the threat and the perception of the threat. Both are not the same, though they are related. Regarding reality, we do not want to put our community in the way of actual harm. Regarding perception, we do not want to unnecessarily offend onlookers by seeming to be either reckless on the one hand or intimidated on the other.

OVERVIEW OF THE PLAN

In all phases of reopening, we are dedicated to including our entire membership in the life of our church. We will be resuming “in person” services on Sunday mornings beginning June 14th. We will also be broadcasting a livestream of our services for those who cannot be with us in person on Sunday mornings. It is our prayer that these partial gatherings on Sunday mornings will be encouraging to our body as we wait for the day that we can all meet together again on Sunday mornings.

Community group leaders have been given discretion by the elders as to how their meetings are held going forward. Our elders believe it is within the current guidelines to allow community groups to meet in person. It is up to the community group leader to make the decision where and how their group will meet, and what degree of precaution they will be taking during those meetings.

Meetings on campus (community groups, bible studies, prayer groups, etc.) will be resuming on campus in July. These meetings will be permitted under specific instructions and in adherence to the health guidelines set forth by governmental authorities. More information on these processes will be made available in due time.

SUNDAY GATHERINGS

In order to observe the prevention practices most widely acknowledged as beneficial, we can only gather in our building if we reduce the number of people entering into it at one time.

This reduction is no simple matter. Our people are in a variety of situations regarding their personal health, their occupational exposure to potential carriers, the age range of their families, and even their own opinion regarding governmental restrictions. We wish to be sensitive to these differences, while having a unified strategy for regathering. That being said, we recognize the following realities:

1. A Portion of Our Congregation Will Need to Stay Home

We are asking that anyone who has exhibited any sign of illness, with or without fever, within the previous 14 days to not attend services. This is in keeping with the standards for workplaces and gatherings laid out by the CDC, and we think it is especially important in large group gathering. As we said, our service will be streamed live online so anyone not joining in person can still participate.

2. A Portion of Our Congregation May Choose to Stay Home

Some of our members may choose to stay home out of concern for their own health or, conversely, out of concern about the restrictions being asked of them. Our leadership remains dedicated to continue serving you remotely in the present phase.

- **Aged 65 and above.** We know many of you are healthy and strong, and that 65 is just a number. But we also know the risk associated with this threshold according to many public health advisories. The danger to this age demographic is higher than any other, and we want you to preserve your health as best as your able. You may choose to stay home for the time being. But if you feel that it is safe to gather, you are welcome.
- **At-Risk health conditions.** If you are immunocompromised in any way that makes you more susceptible to illness in general, or particularly vulnerable to respiratory problems (e.g., asthma), there is a greater threat to your health associated with larger gatherings. We want you to be safe at home. But if you feel that it is safe to gather, you are welcome.
- **Uncomfortable with restrictions.** Anyone who is uncomfortable with the guidelines below or thinks it is unlikely they will be able to comply with them may choose to stay home. The restrictions below will be uncomfortable for everyone, but for some it may be uncomfortable to the point of distraction from the purpose of gathering. We respect this decision if you think it serves you and your family best.

3. A Portion of Our Congregation May Choose to Gather

Some of our congregation will choose to gather in reduced numbers. It's certainly not the whole church gathering we long for, but we can still use the meeting as an opportunity for encouragement and fellowship. For those who choose to gather, we will be abiding by the physical distancing and sanitation guidelines set forth by governing authorities.¹ In order to join one of these services, you will need to register your attendance beforehand. That registration link will be available on our website and through Realm each Monday for the upcoming service.

HOW THE SERVICE AND SPACE WILL BE SET UP

Our partial gatherings will feel odd, maybe even frustrating. We'll all feel that. Even though we will all be experiencing these temporary frustrations together, our elders believe it's worth our effort to gather partially anyway. In the midst of our frustration and longing, the reality of what we have as a church body will be shining through: A wonderful community of young and old, sincerely glad to be together with one another, united by our love for Christ.

¹ Our current limitation on capacity in the sanctuary is 97 people. In addition to the sanctuary, we will use the FLC as an overflow room to fit another 60 people. If we fill both rooms to capacity in both services, we will look to add more services as needed.

Our service will be 60 minutes long. We will worship the Lord corporately with the elements we've always believed are essential: the reading, singing, praying, and preaching of the Word of God.

Here are the most evident changes to the service:

1. You will need to reserve a seat for yourself/your party before attending service.
2. We will only be parking in every other space in the parking lot.
3. There will be no Sunday morning Bible studies, nursery ministry, children's ministry, or youth group services offered. We are looking forward to having children together with their families during the service in the sanctuary.
4. Most of the church campus will be closed and off limits. The sanctuary and FLC will be open for services. We will also have restroom facilities, baby changing stations, and nursing facilities available during our services.
5. We will keep the room temperature cooler than usual because face masks have a tendency to make people feel too warm.
6. You will be seated in the sanctuary (or FLC) by an usher. Once seated, we ask that you remain so for the remainder of the service if possible.
7. Bulletins will be digital, to be used on personal devices.
8. Offering will be collected in deposit boxes upon entry.
9. Volunteers will clean with approved disinfectants after each service.
10. When the service closes, we will dismiss by section.
11. After the first service is over, we ask that you NOT congregate in the parking lot. We need to empty the parking lot quickly so that we can have space for the second service attendees to park.

WHAT WE ASK YOU TO DO: A QUICK GUIDE TO SUNDAY MORNING

In addition to the setup we outlined above, each of us will have to actively participate as individuals. We ask those who gather to practice the following standards during our services. We understand some of these practices will be uncomfortable and will even feel like they infringe on personal freedom. That's because they do. But we believe these practices are a way of sacrificially serving others. We will reconsider each of these practices week to week in hopes of removing them as soon as we safely can.

GETTING READY TO GO

1. Check the temperature of each family member planning to attend. If anyone is above 100.5°F, please keep the whole family home for at least 14 days.
2. We suggest using the bathroom before you go. We'll have a restroom open for urgencies only since they're the highest risk area for germ transfer. The shorter service should help.
3. The bulletin and announcements will be emailed to you on Sunday morning in lieu of handing out printed copies. If you do not currently receive email announcements from the church, please email info@ccclh.org to sign up.

4. Pack a cloth facemask for each family member over 2 years old. Facemasks protect others more than they protect yourself. We ask you to abide by the standard set forth by the OC Health Officer's orders on May 28th, 2020².
5. As you approach the building, you will enter one of the 2 lines that lead to the sanctuary door. Please maintain six feet of physical distancing between your party and the next party in front of you while in line.
6. Please do not enter the line until your party is complete. If your party is not complete, you will not be allowed into the sanctuary until everyone in your party is present. There will be no saving seats once seated inside because of distancing and occupancy requirements that we need to maintain.
7. If you are attending the second service, please do not arrive any earlier than 30 minutes before the start of the service. We will be cleaning the sanctuary and you will not be allowed inside until our sanitation is complete.

IN THE BUILDING

1. Ushers will help direct traffic and arrange seating. We will fill each section of the sanctuary from front to back.
2. Once you are seated, please remain so until the end of the service when your row is dismissed by an usher.
3. Please refrain from handshakes, hugs, and other greetings that require physical contact. Even from behind a mask, a smile goes a long way.
4. Do your best to maintain six feet of distance from people who are not part of your household.

EXITING THE BUILDING

1. We will dismiss by sections at the close of the service and file out of the sanctuary like a wedding. Please be prompt in exiting as we will need to clean the sanctuary between our services, and please try to maintain physical distancing as you exit the building.
2. Please do not congregate in the parking lot between services. While we recognize this will decrease the amount of time we are able to spend together, we need to empty the parking lot between services to be able to park the next group of attendees. Thank you for understanding and cooperating with this directive.

² **Cloth Face-Covering.** All Orange County residents and visitors shall wear a cloth face-covering outside their home when they are not able to maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance from another person who is not a family/household member or does not reside in the same living unit.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

We recognize that the guidelines that are currently in place create an environment that is less than ideal for our worship time. Know that our staff has invested many hours praying, thinking, and planning to develop this plan. Our ushers will be doing the work of implementing this plan; please help make their job a joy and not a burden by cooperating with their instruction. We look forward to the day where we can all gather together again, free of any restrictions. Until that day, know that it is the desire of the staff to serve our body well.

If you have any questions, feel free to send them to info@ccclh.org.

On behalf of the staff, with love,

Jesus Cantu
Staff Elder of Administration