

REOPENING WORSHIP
First Christian Reformed Church, Sioux Falls, SD
May 2020

On Friday, May 8, the Council announced the good news that, after careful reflection and with due consideration for the guidance of our state and city civic leaders, “in-person worship” will resume on Sunday, May 17, 2020. Together we may lift up praise to the Lord for leading us to this moment in our Church’s history.

The reopening of our services will honor the boundaries of the Sioux Falls City Council’s current “No Mingling” ordinance that limits the number of on-site persons at various venues to no more than 50% occupancy. That allows First CRC to include 400-475 comfortably spaced worshippers per service utilizing the sanctuary and narthex areas. We recognize not everyone is ready to return to “in-person” worship. Each person and family must decide their own health and personal risk tolerance to be in public places and activities. Participation through “on-line worship,” therefore, continues to be an excellent option during this pandemic, particularly those who are considered to be most vulnerable to or high risk for infection.

We ask that you carefully read the information below. If we together follow these guidelines the life and ministry of First CRC will prove to be a joyful experience for all.

SUMMER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Five different points of worship are available to members and guests. They include 2 morning in-person services, including on-line participation, and 1 evening service.

- Resume Two Morning Services (8:30 am & 10:30 am)
 - Spaced seating in the sanctuary and narthex
 - Video Feed to 2 additional monitors in narthex, and two monitors in the Café Connection
 - Online worship available through Facebook, the Church’s website, and Livestream
- Resume Evening Psalm Study/Worship (5:00 pm)
 - Spaced seating in sanctuary
 - Online worship is not available
- Participants in “in-person” worship are requested to bring their own Bible (hard-copy or smart-phone)

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM FIRST CRC

Personal and public health are important to First CRC. Therefore, the Council and Staff promise to do all they are able to provide a sanitized, safe and secure ministry environment. You can expect the following:

- The Church has been and will continue to be deep cleaned prior to each major event. Members and guests can be assured that the disinfectants and other cleaning supplies used by First CRC are the same as those used in hospitals and similar institutions
- The Church will provide hand sanitizing stations in the following areas:
 - 1 station at each of the entrances to the sanctuary (3 total)
 - 1 station at each welcome center desk in the Narthex and Café Connection (2 total)
- The Church will provide worship and fellowship support in the following ways:
 - Touchless entry and exit for all members and guests
 - Verbal Mutual Greeting (no hand shaking)
 - Online Connection Card on your smartphone or other device (to replace Fellowship Pad)
 - Four (4) Offering Drop Boxes strategically placed throughout the narthex area.
 - Appropriately spaced seating in the sanctuary and narthex, with Council members, Church staff, and Ushers assisting the congregation in assuring uncongested seating during all gatherings
- The Church will keep the Activity Center and Lower Level closed until further notice, and encourages fellowship to take place outside of the building

WHAT FIRST CRC REQUESTS FROM YOU

Biblical worship is always public and communal. It is the fellowship of believers who gather together before the Lord to exalt and glorify His name. It is important, therefore, to embrace the Biblical emphasis, echoed by both our Governor and Mayor, to make good and responsible personal choices for the sake of public health. They include:

- Each person and family are encouraged to engage in personal responsibility and self-care – washing hands regularly, practicing good hygiene, staying home when sick, and respecting the well-being of neighbors
- Each person and family are encouraged to assess his/her own risk tolerance. While the Church is regularly and thoroughly disinfected, it is impossible to ensure complete protection from any virus anywhere
- Each person and family are encouraged to practice communal understanding, respect, and care – members and guests should feel comfortable to wear face masks even though they are not required

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT IN THE FUTURE

Moving forward in a spirit of gospel confidence and hope, we will continue to carefully open more ministry throughout the summer in anticipation that we will be open for full regular ministry in the Fall. You will hear more in late May or early June about specific start-up dates for some of these other ministries (in no particular order):

- Congregational Meeting for the Selection of Elders & Deacons
- Congregational Mid-week Reconnection Fellowship Event(s)
- Resuming self-serve coffee fellowship after morning worship services
- Resuming coffee service through the Café Connection Coffee Bar
- Resuming Valet Service
- Resuming Sunday Transportation Ministry (van service)
- Resuming use of the Nursery for Worship
- Resuming Children's Church (ages 3-5)
- Middle School & High School Ministry
- MOPS Summer Bible Study
- Senior Circuit

If you have questions or observations that you believe should be considered by the Council, please direct them to the following email address: office@firstchristianreformed.org. Our mutual response to this pandemic is a work in progress. Your input is valued.

WALKING IN FAITH TOGETHER

The Council is eager to resume God's gift of worship. We are invited to prepare for that joyful occasion with the words of Psalm 100:

*Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth.
Worship the Lord with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.
Know that the Lord is God.
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.*

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his name.
For the Lord is good and his love
endures forever;
his faithfulness continues through
all generations.*

Sincerely,

The Council