

Updated August 10, 2020

To the Congregation of Shalom,

As the reality of COVID-19 continues to affect all of us, we have updated the guidelines Shalom is putting in place which allow us to gather for worship while also seeking to keep each other safe and healthy.

- A. **Morning Service.** For the time being, we will have one morning service at our usual time of 9am. We will be practicing social distancing guidelines. If our sanctuary is filled to capacity with social distancing guidelines in place, then the narthex and fellowship hall will be used for overflow. We will do our best to ensure the safety of our congregants and do our best to insure everyone is able to participate in the service.
- B. **Live streaming.** We are now live-streaming Shalom's worship services. We hope that live-streaming offers an opportunity for you to continue to worship safely at home while staying connected to the life and ministry of Shalom.
- C. **Illness.** If you or someone in your family is sick, or has been sick in the past week, please stay home. This is a great way to show your love for your neighbor.
- D. **Compromised Groups.** We recognize that COVID-19 affects certain groups more negatively than others. Therefore, if you don't feel comfortable joining us in person, please feel free to join us online.
- E. **Before coming to worship.**
  - 1. Wash your hands.
  - 2. Masks – We encourage people to wear masks throughout your time within the building, but masks will not be required. For your safety, ushers will be wearing masks as they help you in and out of the sanctuary.
  - 3. Entering the Church –Please allow space between families and be patient as people wait to be ushered into the sanctuary.
- F. **Logistics while in the building**
  - 1. Social Distancing – Please maintain social distancing at all times.
  - 2. Hand Sanitizer – There will be hand sanitizer stations as soon as you enter the building and throughout the building.
  - 3. Bathrooms – Please limit use of the bathrooms to the extent you can. If your children need to use the bathroom, please assist them. The bathrooms will be open, but we can limit the possible spread of the virus if as few people as possible use them. If you use the bathroom, please wash your hands.
  - 4. Drinking Fountain – It will be turned off. You are welcome to bring a bottle of water into church.

5. Coats and Jackets – If you wear a coat or jacket to church, please take it with you to your seats. This will help us avoid congregating around the coat hangers before and after the service.
6. Mailboxes – Please do not crowd around the mailboxes. Please wait your turn if others are already in front of the mailboxes.
7. Nursery – The nursery will not be staffed. You are still welcomed to use it as a “cry-room”. Please sanitize the door handle before and after use. Disinfectant wipes will be available.
8. Coffee – We hope to start serving coffee again soon, but for now, please bring your own.
9. Parents with Children – Please be aware of your children after the service. Encourage them to respect other children’s space. Be sensitive that all families are handling this in different ways and be respectful.
10. Surfaces – We will seek to limit the frequency of touching common surfaces and objects. Please continue to bring your own Bible.
11. Safety Team – For your safety, this team will address any issues that may arise. Please don’t engage in behaviors that might cause a confrontation. We ask that you consider how your actions will affect or be interpreted by others at church and when in doubt, show love.
12. Meetings – If social distancing can be maintained, in person meetings will be allowed at church. As per normal protocol, we ask that you schedule any meetings with Dawn at the church office. Please clean the space you use. Cleaning supplies are available on tables within the fellowship hall and narthex.

G. **Prayer meeting.** The prayer time with Council will be held at 8:30 in the triple room.

H. **Worship.**

1. Seating – We will have ushers help you find seating. Please do not seat yourselves. **Please respect and be patient with the ushers.** They are trying to fit the maximum number of people in church while maintaining social distancing. We will have less seating than normal and as we hope to see more people returning to our worship services as school begins again, space may be at a premium, so please use all available space in the row.
  - a. Families – If at all possible, please have your family prepared to sit at the same time. This will help the ushers fit everyone in our limited space and minimize you coming into close contact with others.
  - b. Spacing – We will seat families together. Chairs have been re-arranged in the sanctuary to provide maximum seating while social distancing. You will be seated with three chairs between groups.

2. Offering – We will have collection baskets by the back doors of the sanctuary to place your offering in as you exit. The deacons will not collect it during the service. Other offering avenues will continue:
    - a. Online giving from Shalom’s website
    - b. Direct Deposit
    - c. Mail a check, using your envelopes
  3. Communion – We will be celebrating communion on our regularly scheduled times, and will be using prepackaged elements.
  4. Exiting the service – The ushers will also usher you out after the service. As you leave the sanctuary, the fellowship hall will be open for socializing, and you are also welcome to socialize in the parking lot. We ask that you maintain social distancing while fellowshiping and be respectful of your fellow members.
- I. **Children and Youth programs.** With respect to any church activities or programs involving our children and youth, in the event social distancing cannot be maintained, all adults and children in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and older will be required to wear masks. If social distancing cannot be maintained, children in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and younger are encouraged to wear masks but are not required to do so. If social distancing can be maintained, masks are not required.

Finally, understand that the situation could change if circumstances dictate. The Council is constantly monitoring and evaluating the situation and will keep you posted if that is the case. We thank everyone for your prayers, patience, and understanding in the matter. We are looking forward to once again meeting in person as the family of God.

Again, please be patient with us and each other as we seek to navigate into this new normal.

Blessings,

The Council of Shalom CRC