

REOPENING CHURCH GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

The following recommendations, guidelines, and policies have been approved as we continue in-person worship and meetings at Gibbon Faith United Church. The original policies are listed at the end of this document for reference as well. These policies are made public to help everyone in our Faith United family better understand our plan and help make reopening as safe and comfortable for everyone we can. These policies are formulated to meet the requirements and recommendations of the State of Nebraska HHS, Two Rivers Public Health, Great Plains Conference, our District Superintendent, and our insurance provider – Brotherhood Mutual.

Everyone needs to make their own decisions about when they are comfortable returning to worship or other group activities. Please make the decisions that fit for you and your family. We want to be together, but only when you are comfortable. Online worship will continue to be offered, as will online options for those not ready to meet in person for committees. If you are considered “high risk” for getting very sick from this, please consider your health a much bigger priority than your presence. If you are feeling sick or have been around a known or possible COVID-19 infected person, please stay home. Any questions about these policies can be directed to the pastor.

BUILDING USAGE:

- 1) In-Person Sunday worship, Saturday worship, and Hispanic worship have resumed.
- 2) Adult Sunday school, bible studies, etc. resumed in FH or classroom if socially distancing.
- 3) All committees resumed In-person with social distancing standards.
- 4) Weddings and funerals allowed following DHM standards for worship.
- 5) Community groups can resume with permission and agreement to social distancing and cleaning
- 6) Children’s Sunday school, Youth Group, Confirmation resume in September (standards below)
- 7) All groups using facility may be asked to help with cleaning after their activity is over

FACILITY SETUP:

- 1) Remove all bibles, hymnals
- 2) Every other pew closed for social distancing
- 3) Groups of up to 8 people allowed in pews or at tables.
Individuals can choose to sit with friends/family if they want. Always your choice!
- 4) Mark floors with 6 foot markers in sanctuary
- 5) 6-foot spacers in pews for those who want to separate groups in a pew
- 6) Fellowship Hall tables set up for overflow and fellowship time spaced 6 ft apart
- 7) Classrooms only open with permission, and agreement to socially distance

ENTERING/EXITING:

- 1) All Sanctuary doors will be propped open at all times
- 2) After worship rows will be “dismissed” by ushers back to front
- 3) Use of side doors encouraged to limit crowds
- 4) Hand sanitizer will be available in the entryway inside the main doors
- 5) Enter/exit only through the main doors (east and west double doors)

Approved by Ad. Council 5/13/2020; Revised with permission 8/1/2020

REVISED WORSHIP PRACTICES:

- 1) Bulletins allowed, but everything on screen, no hymnals, everything is on screen
- 2) Ushers would record attendance, not individuals
- 3) Offering plate by 3 rear Sanctuary entrances
- 4) Limited congregational singing, only those masked can sing
- 5) Passing of the peace done in place (no leaving pew, hugs, etc).
- 6) Optional communion with individual elements. Masks and gloves required for servers
- 7) No use of mic for Joys and Concerns (Pastor will try to summarize and repeat)
- 8) Children's time with option for kids to come forward. Social distance spacing marked on floor
 Wrapped snacks can be handed out (not grabbed by them) if masked and sanitize before
- 9) No Choir at this time. Special music by single families or small group 12 ft distanced

MASKS:

- 1) Wearing masks is **Strongly Encouraged** especially when entering/exiting
- 2) Masks are not required for soloists, preaching or speaking IF 12 or more feet from others
- 3) Masks will be required for ushers and greeters, acolytes and others when serving
- 4) Free masks will be available at the doors for those who may not have one
- 5) Masks are required to be worn if you participate in congregational singing
 (RATIONALE: singing expels particles the same distance as coughing)

MEALS/FELLOWSHIP TIME

- 1) All Food service will follow guidelines for restaurants
- 2) Food will be served to people at tables (no serving lines of any kind)
- 3) Food/drink must be individually plated in kitchen and delivered to tables
- 4) Servers must wear masks, wash hands or sanitize regularly. Gloves optional
- 5) Only disposable plates/cups/silverware
- 6) All "dirty" items left on table, do not take items to trash, will be cleaned up afterward

CLEANING PRACTICES:

- 1) Facility must be cleaned and sanitized between every group using facility
- 2) Sanitize all high touch surfaces (pews*, door handles, switches, faucets)
 *It's impossible to hit every single angle of the wood, and fabric has no good way to clean
- 3) Deep clean all bathrooms between every activity
- 4) Vacuuming only done with masks on and at least 48 hours after event
- 5) Create checklist of all cleaning needing done after each event in building
- 6) Will need volunteer help to clean this deeply this often!

Worship server policies

If you agree to serve in these areas, please note these are the policies you are agreeing to follow until such time as it's deemed reasonable to discontinue:

Usher/Greeter

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- 1) Masks are required for ushers/greeters, and encouraged for everyone. Once worship begins, you can remove your mask until you need to do a task that puts you “in” someone’s 6ft space, or until congregational singing (when masks are
- 2) Sanitize your hands often, ideally anytime you’ve touched your mask.
- 3) Ushers/greeters will record attendance for EVERYONE. List every person in the family. If you don’t know the person, ask, but ushers MUST write it down.
- 4) Bulletins will be handed out if people want. Sanitize before starting.
- 5) No offering plates passed. Leave money in plates for pastor or counter to pick up.
- 6) Ushers/greeters must “dismiss” rows from back to front of sanctuary and from front to back in fellowship hall after worship.

Scripture reader

- a) Scripture readers can “unmask” for reading, but should wear mask while coming up/going back

Children’s Time

- 1) Children’s Time leader can “unmask” during their sermon, but should wear mask while coming up/ going back, as kids are seated, and dismissed.
- 2) Kids can now come up. Stars will mark where 6 different families can sit and still be socially distanced. You may need to help them know where to sit.
- 3) Snacks can be handed out if: a) you’ve put your mask back on, b) then sanitized hands, c) snacks are individually wrapped, d) you hand them the snack (i.e. they can’t reach in and grab items).

Fellowship Time Snacks

- a) Servers must wear masks and wash hands before plating or serving food. Gloves are encouraged but not require.
- b) All items must be individually plated, drinks must be pre-poured in kitchen
- c) People must be served at their seats (i.e. no serving line where people come up to the same place to get food.
- d) ABSOLUTELY NO SELF SERVE EVEN FOR SECONDS OR REFILLS

CHILDRENS MIN./YOUTH POLICIES

1) SCREEN: youth and leaders should stay home if they're sick, might be sick, or were knowingly exposed. Parents are asked to check their student's temperature before youth activities. Students may be asked to confirm they had their temperature checked, or have their temperature taken upon arrival. Temperatures of 100.4 or higher are considered a clear sign of illness.

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2) **SANITIZE:** All youth should sanitize hands upon arrival, wash hands or sanitize hands before and after using the restroom, eating, or touching an item touched by another individual.

3) **MASKS:** Masks can welcome, but are not required as long as students practice social distancing. If students consistently have trouble social distancing, a mask may be the best choice for them, and may be recommended to them if the student struggles to follow social distancing.

4) **SOCIAL DISTANCING:** Students are asked to social distance whenever possible. Seating will be spread out, though it may not always be 6 feet apart. Students must refrain from touching other people or other people's "stuff" at all times. Most of all respect other people's space and comfort level.

5) **GROUP SIZE/SPACE:** Youth will meet in the Fellowship Hall, Sanctuary, or outside to spread out at the time being. If the group is more than 20 including leaders the group will be split into 2 spaces if at all possible.

6) **GAMES/SHARED ITEMS:** Any games or activities will be designed to keep youth spaced out, not touching one another, or touching the same items as others. If items must be shared, those items should be wiped down with a sanitizer between uses.

7) **SNACKS:** Snacks may not be offered. If snacks are offered, these items will be individually packaged or plated, and served to the students (i.e. no self-serve or everyone coming up to the same table to get their snacks).

8) **PARENTAL CHOICE:** We absolutely want all our youth to be here. But we also know everyone's comfort level is different. If you are uncomfortable with the policies we have, please let us know. But, we also realize whatever policies we have won't fit everyone's desires. It's always a parent's choice to allow their youth to come or not.

9) **FOLLOWING THE GUIDELINES:** Our youth volunteers love your youth - that's why they do this each week. But their primary goal is to teach and build relationships, not implement the rules. Students need to be responsible for their own behavior. But, if there are situations where youth have been asked to change their behavior and do not, they may be asked to leave. That in no way means our sponsors don't love your youth. It simply means we love ALL the youth, and therefore have to protect their physical and emotional health by making sure these guidelines are followed. Please help us by making sure your youth knows, understands, and agrees to follow these guidelines.

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10) OTHER: We also want parents to know we have enhanced cleaning practices in our facility using CDC approved cleaners and practices to assure the space is safe. If the decision is made that Gibbon Public School is closed for health concerns, youth activities would be suspended during that time as well. If there has been an COVID-19 exposure in our building, the church has plans in place to assess the risk, clean the space, and temporarily shut down if needed. In these ever-changing times we will do our best to contact all parents and students via text message to share any changes or cancellations.

ORIGINAL REOPENING GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

REOPENING TIMELINE:

- 1) In-person worship resumes on Sunday, May 31 at 10:30am (Online continues to be offered)
- 2) No Saturday worship for at least 4 weeks after reopening due to the amount of required cleaning between services
- 3) Hispanic church limited to 1 service a week starting 1 week after us, Review monthly
- 4) Adult Sunday School on hold until we figure out worship flow and overflow, then in FH
- 5) No community groups other than WIC and other community aid groups
- 6) Committees follow Directed Health Measure limits and distancing practices. Only meet in Fellowship Hall

Note: Online options remain available for group or any individuals who want

- 7) Funerals follow same guidelines as our worship practices
- 8) Weddings – case by case basis, with social distancing as possible
- 9) All groups will currently be asked to meet only in Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall.
- 10) All groups using facility may be asked to help with cleaning after their activity is over

FACILITY:

- 8) Remove all bibles, hymnals
- 9) Mark pews for appropriate seating, DO NOT sit in the taped areas of the pews
- 10) Mark floors with 6 foot markers
- 11) Set up Fellowship Hall for overflow (tables 6 ft apart)
Please have 1 family per table or 2 single people on each end of a table
- 12) Close all classrooms to limit exposed spaces
- 13) Fellowship Hall dividers pulled until overflow needed

MASKS:

- 6) Wearing masks is **Strongly Encouraged** especially when entering/exiting
- 7) Masks are not required for soloists, preaching or speaking IF 12 or more feet from others
- 8) Masks will be required for ushers and greeters, acolytes and others when serving
- 9) Free masks will be available at the doors for those who may not have one
- 10) Masks are required to be worn if you participate in congregational singing
(RATIONALE: singing expels particles the same distance as coughing)

ENTERING/EXITING:

- 6) Ushers or greeters will open outside doors to avoid multiple people touching handles.

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- 7) All Sanctuary doors will be propped open at all times
- 8) After worship rows will be “dismissed” by ushers back to front
- 9) Use of side doors encouraged to limit crowds
- 10) No Fellowship or coffee time before or after worship
- 11) All who wish to visit with friends please to do so outside before or after worship.
- 12) Hand sanitizer will be available in the entryway inside the main doors
- 13) Enter/exit only through the main doors (east and west double doors)

REVISED WORSHIP PRACTICES:

- 10) No Bulletins, no hymnals, everything is on screen
- 11) Ushers would record attendance, not individuals
- 12) Offering plate by 3 rear Sanctuary entrances
- 13) Only 1 Congregational song, only those masked can sing
- 14) No passing of the peace or greeting time.
- 15) No In-person communion in June (revisit in July)
- 16) No use of mic for Joys and Concerns (Pastor will try to summarize and repeat)
- 17) Kids remain with parents for Children’s time/no treat, or treats handed out before by usher
- 18) No Choir at this time. Special music by single families or small group 12 ft distanced

CLEANING PRACTICES:

- 7) Facility must be cleaned and sanitized between every group using facility
- 8) Sanitize all high touch surfaces (pews*, door handles, switches, faucets)
*It’s impossible to hit every single angle of the wood, and fabric has no good way to clean
- 9) Deep clean all bathrooms between every activity
- 10) Vacuuming only done with masks on and at least 48 hours after event
- 11) Create checklist of all cleaning needing done after each event in building
- 12) Will need volunteer help to clean this deeply this often!

ABSENCE PLANNING:

PASTOR: In the event that Pastor Mike and his family are asked to quarantine, the church is responsible for organizing and leading worship until they return. If Pastor Mike is healthy, he will record sermon. Kathy Pierce and Linda Keiper have volunteered to help with leading worship in this situation, but more assistance would be needed. Those who preach would be compensated as normal and Linda would be allowed to turn in hours as a Lay Minister for this work.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: If Gina’s family is required to quarantine, any work she is not able to do from home (or is unable to do because of health) would need to be covered by volunteers. If needed, SPRC can hire temporary employees to cover needed tasks until Gina can return

CUSTODIAN: If Cindy is unable to perform her cleaning responsibilities, or is uncomfortable with the responsibility because of her health concerns, those tasks will need to be performed by volunteers. If needed, SPRC can hire temporary employees to cover needed tasks until Cindy returns.