

Phase 1 Church Re-Open June 7th

Dear Bethel Members,

We believe, *God willing*, that we will be able to reopen the church for in-person worship beginning **June 7th** with some limitations. These times have made life difficult, and church services are no exception. But we believe that Jesus Christ is the only source of lasting hope in any age. Our aim is to equip our local Body to demonstrate that hope to our neighbors in a Christ-centered and thoughtful re-opening that takes our calling and our circumstances seriously. The plan below has incorporated feedback from the Health Team, made up of medical professionals within Bethel.

We, the Elders, ask that you show a special measure of grace towards us and your fellow man, with the fruit of the Spirit characterizing all we do (Galatians 5:22-23). We will do our best to strike the balance between caution and faith, praying for Godly wisdom (James 1:5), but any plan will need to be adjusted as we learn what does and doesn't work. In other words, reopening will be a process. Here is Phase One:

- 1) **Two service locations** – Initially, we will limit the number in the sanctuary to 75 (number may be adjusted), with overflow seating in the Fellowship Hall. If you plan to participate on June 7th, **please let us know today** or as soon as possible [by clicking this link](#), so that we can plan for seating. We realize that some people won't like this arrangement, but we ask that you follow the plan until we can get a better handle on what kind of numbers we will be dealing with.
- 2) **Sanitizing** – We will organize a small volunteer cleaning crew from each group to sanitize the sanctuary after each service. Sign up to help [here](#).
- 3) **Distancing** – We will use every other pew for seating, with tape to indicate appropriate spacing. Household families can sit together, with space between your family and others. The Fellowship Hall will be set up with groups of chairs, separated for appropriate spacing.
- 4) **Separate entrances** – We will have the sanctuary divided into two sections. The wings and the front part of the main pew areas will enter and exit through the sanctuary side doors. The rest of the pews will enter and exit through the main doors.
- 5) **Personal protection** – Each person must use hand sanitizer when entering and wear a mask. We ask that you take advantage of both as you enter. We also ask that you keep the masks on throughout the service. Please remember that this is a temporary measure for the sake of loving one another, even those with whom we disagree (1 Corinthians 16:13-14).
- 6) **Limitations** – We need to keep the use of the **restrooms** to a **minimum**. We will have someone monitoring the main restrooms so that only one person/family is in at a time. We will also **not** yet be providing **nursery** or in-person **Sunday Schools**.

We will implement this plan based on updated information received from medical and governmental authorities. We will continue to stream services as we have been doing during the 10:30am service time. We encourage all with health risks (including individuals 65 or older) to continue to participate over the web streaming. If you or anyone in your family is showing signs of sickness, the whole family needs to stay home and watch remotely. We also encourage anyone who doesn't feel comfortable joining the services in person to continue to watch remotely.

We recognize that people differ in their concerns regarding reopening. Conscience is a God-given gift, to be trained by God's Word, and differences of conscience are one of the ways we grow in Christ (Proverbs 27:17, Romans 14:1-15:7). To many these steps may seem like overkill and to some they may not seem like enough precaution. **There are two main reasons we feel strongly about this plan:** First, we need to love our brothers and sisters in the faith enough to take their safety and spiritual health seriously, and second, we are called to represent Christ to our community by loving our neighbors. The church in general has had a lot of attention during this time and much of the attention hasn't been positive. We want to be known as a blessing to the community.

Even though these are difficult times, your elders are honored and humbled to serve all of you. We hope that this plan will promote unity and build fellowship. As you go about your life we ask that you would help us to maintain unity and peace within the body.

With much love,

The Elders

P.S. We will also be putting together a video communicating the initial steps again.