

# Halstead First Mennonite Church

“Proverbs 16:3 Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.”

Leadership at First Mennonite desires to make our times and spaces of worship and fellowship safe and the best they can be. There is no question that we desire greatly to gather in-person. However, we want to do so in a safe and responsible way. The current situation is fluid with lots of unknowns that we are doing our best to think through and prepare for. These guidelines will be a working document that will change as we learn more. We want our plan to prioritize love for our neighbor, (Mt 22:39) instead of just what we would perhaps like. We seek your continued patience and prayer as we plan our times together.

**“Be flexible and patient, extend grace, we are all in a different place.”**

- Some things to know:
  1. We will be aware of and take into account our local and state “Recovery Plans.”
  2. The building has been and will continue to be sanitized and cleaned thoroughly every week.
  3. We ask that everyone practice social distancing to the best of your ability within the limits of our building facility.
  4. We will begin by having two worship services. The first one will begin at 8 a.m. and will not include any singing. The second one will begin at 10 a.m. and will follow the format we have been using on the livestream. Sunday school and Wednesday activities will be added at a later time.
  5. We will not have a nursery to begin with but will add that later.
  6. Children will not come forward for childrens story at this time.
  7. There will be an overflow in Stauffer Hall if the sanctuary becomes full where the livestream will be projected on the screen.
  8. We will have every other pew blocked off to work at seating family groups 6 feet apart.
  9. Ushers will help with seating people and dismissing people.
  10. Bulletins will be in your mailbox or at the back and not passed out.
  11. We will not have greeters to shake hands, however, big smiles and waving are encouraged!
  12. There will be an offering box in the back of the sanctuary for you to place your offering.
  13. We will not have open mic announcement time. Please send any announcements you may have to Debbie or Pastor Steve.
  14. Children's activity packs will be removed from the back. We ask parents to bring something for their children if they feel that is needed.
  15. We ask that you move outside after you have been dismissed following the service and not congregate at the back after the service.
  16. If you are sick or running a temperature, please stay home.
  17. We will continue to livestream our services, so we encourage vulnerable individuals or those who feel uncomfortable coming together at this time to stay home and worship online.

# FAQ

## **Why are there going to be two services?**

This will help spread people out so that we are not all in the building at the same time. There are also differing thoughts on how singing may affect the spread of Covid-19. To help accommodate these differing views, our 8 a.m. service will not have singing and the 10 a.m. service will include some singing.

## **How will we make sure people are not sitting too close to one another?**

We will block off every other pew and have ushers help with seating people. Family groups will be encouraged to sit together to make more room for others.

## **Should I wear a mask?**

Information from CDC on cloth face coverings indicates wearing a mask reduces the potential for transmission of the COVID-19 virus. We will not have any masks on hand so please bring your own. While encouraged, wearing a mask is not mandatory. Many people have differing views on this topic and not everyone will choose to wear one. In order to be heard and clearly understood, those leading the service will not be able to wear them.

## **How should I practice social distancing while at FMC?**

Be aware of trying to maintain 6 feet of distance between yourself and others who are not of your family. It's important to note that not all places in our building are capable of maintaining that so we ask that you do the best you can. The most important thing here is to be aware of others and open to how they feel. Some will feel like social distancing is not important while others will feel that it is very important. In the interest of extending grace and love to each other please respect this and try to keep 6 feet of distance.

## **Will the bathrooms be open?**

Yes, however, we are asking that they only be used when really needed to cut down on unnecessary traffic.

## **How will the offering be collected?**

We will not collect an offering during the service, instead there will be a box at the back of the sanctuary where you can place your offering as you desire.

## **What if more people show up than can be safely seated in the sanctuary?**

We will plan to use Stauffer Hall as an overflow. Chairs will be already set up with appropriate spacing in mind and the service will be projected onto the screen.