

June 16, 2020

Dear East Lincoln Family,

The elders met again last night (June 15) to discuss safety protocols for resuming Sunday Worship Services, beginning June 28 at 9:30am. We are very excited to meet in person again after being apart for nearly 3 months!

Our goal in meeting again is to provide an environment where people from our church family and community will feel comfortable and safe to attend. We are asking everyone from East Lincoln to embrace this goal with us – to put aside personal preferences and have an attitude of love and service to others so as many people as possible will feel comfortable to gather in person for worship and fellowship on Sunday mornings.

Please take a brief online survey after reading this letter so we can have an idea of what attendance will be and who is comfortable with continuing to serve in certain areas of ministry. There are also some questions from the Caring Team to help them know how to better serve you at this time. You can take the survey after reading this letter [by clicking this link](#).

Our primary resource for recommendations on how to safely gather as a large group is the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website and in particular the *CDC Considerations for Events and Gatherings*. According to the CDC, COVID-19 is thought to be mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, sing, etc. It is thought that the virus may also spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose, mouth or eyes, causing infection. The CDC states that we will be at lower risk of infection if people from different households remain spaced at least 6 feet apart, wear cloth face coverings, and do not share objects. So as we develop safety precautions for our specific setting, we have these things in mind.

The safety precautions we are planning to take are listed below. We are hoping to have these in place by June 28 and are asking every person from East Lincoln to graciously cooperate for the sake of those in our church family that are at higher risk.

- **Entering and exiting the building:** We are planning to prop all three entrances open before and after the service, so people don't have to touch door handles. The main entrance will remain open during the whole service. We are also planning to keep the sanctuary doors open all morning for the same reason.
- **Physical contact and spacing:** Please enjoy reconnecting with people! But we are asking that you refrain from shaking hands, hugging, etc. for now and try to keep space between you and people from other households.
- **Seating:** We are planning to have seating in every-other pew so that there will be 6 feet between rows. We also ask that you try to maintain space between you and people from another household in the same pew. We are working on getting a large-screen video feed of the service into the Fellowship Hall with seating around tables that are spread apart for overflow seating or families that would prefer that arrangement.
- **Cloth face-coverings:** As uncomfortable as it is to wear a cloth face-covering, this is one of the most effective ways to prevent passing your respiratory droplets to other people when you're in a confined space, especially when you're singing, according to the CDC. So we

strongly encourage you to wear a cloth face covering at this time while you're in close proximity to other people at church as a way to serve your brothers and sisters in Christ. We ask that you bring a face covering from home, but we will have them available at church as well. We suggest you keep this in your car to use from week to week.

- **Hand sanitizer and covering coughs/sneezes:** We will have hand sanitizer in the main lobby, Fellowship hall, and outside each set of bathrooms. We will have a box of tissues in each pew that is in use and on tables in the fellowship hall. If you have to cough or sneeze, please do so into a tissue and then throw it away.
- **Children's Ministry:** We believe it is in the best interest of our children and volunteers to hold off on providing Discovery Land and Early Childhood Ministries for now and ask parents/guardians to keep your children with you during the Worship Service. There will be an activity bag for each family to grab at the beginning of the service for children to use during the sermon. We are asking everyone to be patient and gracious with the added liveliness that children will bring to the worship service! We are also asking parents and guardians that if your child is crying or being overly disruptive in the sanctuary that you take them to another area until they calm down.
- **Bathrooms and drinking fountains:** Bathrooms will be open. Drinking fountains will not. We assume people will wash their hands thoroughly after using the bathroom, but after you exit and touch the bathroom door you may also want to use hand sanitizer. Instead of drinking fountains, we will provide water bottles at a table in the Fellowship Hall.
- **Other changes during the service:** We will no longer be passing **offering plates**. You may place your offering in the offering box in the Fellowship Hall or safely give online through the church website. We will no longer be passing **friendship registers**. We will get visitor contact information through a tear off portion on our new bulletins and take attendance with a church management software. We will not be passing **communion plates** at this time. Instead, on communion Sundays there will be individually wrapped communion elements available on a table in the Fellowship Hall for you to grab before you enter the sanctuary. The ushers will continue to hand out **bulletins** but will wear face coverings and have washed hands or gloves.
- **Coffee and shared food:** We will not be serving coffee at this time, but you may bring coffee from home. If you bring it in the sanctuary we ask that you use a cup with a sealed lid. There will also not be any shared food or meals at this time, but you may bring snacks from home if needed for your own personal use.
- **After the service:** We encourage people to stay after the service to reconnect and visit. We ask that you try to maintain spacing by utilizing open areas in the Fellowship Hall or by visiting outside if the weather is nice. Please do not congregate in aisles, hallways, or near doorways and entrances. We ask that parents send kids outside after the service as much as possible and continue to keep an eye on them.
- **When to stay at home:** If you are feeling ill or have been exposed to someone that has tested positive for COVID-19, we ask that you stay at home until your doctor says you are no longer contagious. If you have underlying health issues that put you at greater danger from the virus, you may want to stay at home for now. We are planning to continue to have a livestream of the service on Facebook and post both a video and audio recording of the sermon on our website by the next day. We hope to improve the quality as time goes on.

Please take a moment to complete a brief online survey [by clicking this link](#). If you have any questions or concerns about the safety precautions we are taking, please contact the church office. The elders are keeping an eye on the situation in our area and will be making adjustments as time goes on.

For recommendations and safety protocols regarding small groups, committees, and ministry teams that want to use the building, please contact Eric or Kent at the church office.

We are excited to reunite and worship together! Continue to be in prayer for one another and for the church as we seek to follow the Lord's leading during these uncertain times.

In Christ,
Pastor Eric, for the Elders