

6/7/2020

“The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty;  
the Lord is robed in majesty and armed with strength;  
indeed, the world is established, firm and secure.  
Your throne was established long ago;  
you are from all eternity.

Psalm 93 : 1 - 2

Dear Congregation of Creston Church,

I invite you all to take a moment to meditate on the providential wisdom and direction of our God. Even in the midst of so much uncertainty, from the global pandemic to social unrest and economic instability, our God reigns. He sits enthroned, robed in majesty and is working all things toward his righteous and good ends.

As announced after this week’s worship service, you are receiving this letter, along with supplementary documents, to inform you about our church’s plan to resume in-person worship. Our plan follows the phases laid out by our Governor and local government to control the outbreak of COVID-19 in our state. We are currently in Phase 4 of that plan and Governor Whitmer anticipates moving into Phase 5 by July 4th. Once movement into Phase 5 is announced, the council will decide on a date to once again begin in-person worship, with all of the restrictions detailed in the following pages. If you have any questions, please direct them to Case Michielsen or Hope Looyenga.

I encourage you all to persevere through the challenging times we find ourselves in, and follow the direction of the Holy Spirit as he leads you to good works and ministry.

In Christ,

Case Michielsen,  
on behalf of Creston Church Council



# COVID-19 Return Plan for Creston Church

## Trigger

## Creston's Response

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|---|---|
| <p><b>3 Flattening</b><br/>No gatherings allowed</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No change: buildings remain closed</li> <li>• Continue Sunday Service videos with virtual fellowship opportunities</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>4 Improving</b><br/>Small groups (up to 10) are permitted to meet</p>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue Sunday Service videos with virtual fellowship opportunities</li> <li>• Staff is allowed to use their offices after the stay at home order is lifted, staff but must clean up after selves</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>5 Containing</b><br/>Increased size gatherings allowed to meet while practicing social distancing</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The church building is open for Sunday morning worship! We continue to produce the Sunday Service video and watch it together in the sanctuary following the Guidelines for Gathering Safely for Worship including but not limited to:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This group will be capped at the State's recommended number of people per service using an online and/or telephone sign-up sheet</li> <li>○ People from different households maintain recommended social distancing</li> <li>○ Face masks required</li> <li>○ No singing permitted</li> <li>○ No coffee time after church</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Sunday Service video will continue to premiere on YouTube at the regular time for those who aren't ready or able to attend</li> <li>• The virtual fellowship opportunities will continue</li> <li>• Committees and small groups may resume in-person gatherings limited to ministry center or outdoors following the recommended guidelines</li> <li>• Persons designated by the CDC as "vulnerable" are discouraged from attending</li> <li>• No nursery or onsite children's ministries provided</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>6 Post-Pandemic</b><br/>The New Normal</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular worship services will resume in the Sanctuary</li> <li>• We will celebrate Resurrection Sunday!!</li> <li>• Nursery and onsite children and youth ministries resume when able to follow CDC guidelines and following GRPS schedule</li> <li>• Offerings collected by passing plate and/or a no-touch option</li> </ul>   |

## Additional Notes

Creston will be doing its best to follow recommendations by the State, CDC and the Classis. Each "trigger" is based on Governor Whitmer's plan to reopen Michigan. There is no set timeline for this and it is ever changing depending on the number of COVID-19 cases. There is also the possibility that we can go backward and forward

between stages. Once a new stage is triggered, the date when the response will go into effect will be decided and announced by council. This will give Creston the necessary time to prepare for the changes.

If Creston becomes aware that someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 attended a church event (including up to 48 hours before they had their first symptoms), Creston will<sup>1</sup>:

1. Contact the person immediately and pastorally, seeking to respond to their needs.
  - A person(s) within the congregation should be designated to reach out to the person who has contracted COVID-19; this person should then activate the procedure outlined below.
2. Seek to determine who has been exposed.
  - A log will be kept of who attends worship services and other events in the buildings
  - Confidentiality must be respected
3. Notify the Kent County Health Department
  - Communicable Diseases Department: 616-632-7228 or 616-632-7100 (general number)
4. Communication
  - Contact each person who was directly exposed by phone to alert them
    - Possible conversation starter: “Someone in our church has tested positive for COVID-19, and you have been identified as being present at that time. We want to support you in this – CDC recommends persons who have been exposed to self-isolate, monitor themselves for any symptoms, and talk to their doctor.”
  - Follow up with an email; periodically check in with both the person who tested positive and those who have been exposed.
  - Inform the staff and congregation with this sample language: “A person in our congregation has tested positive on a certain date and is now self-isolating. Those who came in contact with this person at Creston events have been informed and are following their doctors' advice and CDC guidelines.”
5. Council should consider closing all in-building activities for a time.
6. Extra cleaning/disinfecting should be done, according to CDC guidelines

As the situation becomes clearer, we will be able to explore options for helping those the CDC describes as vulnerable return to worship safely. It may include such things as: a dedicated entrance or a section roped off in the sanctuary within which social distancing requirements remain.

Creston also continues to maintain a plan to continue checking in on elderly and homebound members, and helping support basic needs. Creston also encourages members to reach out to their Shepherding Elder or a Deacon with spiritual or physical needs.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.covidchurchresources.com/>, <https://hbr.org/2020/03/your-employee-tested-positive-for-covid-19-what-do-you-do>, <https://www.hklaw.com/en/insights/publications/2020/03/covid-19-guidance-for-faith-based-institutions>



# Guidelines for Gathering Safely for Worship

## Creston Church

To help slow the spread of the virus, when conducting services in person, Creston will:

1. Encouraging attendees age 65 and older to stay home.
2. Ask all attendees with underlying health conditions to remain at home.
3. Require any attendee to stay home if they have had a fever within 72 hours, have a cough, or have had contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 within the previous 14 days.
4. Someone must maintain a list of each person entering and take each person's temperature.
5. Require anyone in attendance to wear a face mask or covering.<sup>1</sup>
6. Children 2 years old and under are not permitted, due to the danger of them wearing masks.
7. Keep nursery and on-site children's ministries closed until we are able to comply with current CDC recommendations for child care facilities.<sup>2</sup> No nursery, Little Lambs, or Children's Worship until schools open. However, children over the age of 2 years are free to attend the worship in the sanctuary, but must stay with their parents/guardians at all times.
8. Limit building access to a short time before and after the activity and allow access only to places where proper social distancing can be maintained.
9. Sanitize seating, restrooms, and other high-touch areas like door handles before and after each service following guidelines set by the CDC.<sup>3</sup> High-touch areas in the church entrance, including door handles should be sanitized during the service to prepare for the congregation's departure.
10. When possible increase circulation of outdoor air by opening windows and doors and using fans.
11. Refrain from passing collection plates.
12. Remove the Bibles and hymnals from the pews. Words will be provided on the screen.
13. No singing.
14. Find alternative ways to administer the sacraments that do not include the same surfaces or violate social distancing orders.
15. Provide hand sanitizer, masks and signage with these guidelines at entrances and throughout the building.
16. Provide virtual means to fellowship, both after the service and other times. No refreshments (Coffee/food) will be served at church.
17. Encourage individuals to practice social (physical) distancing in line with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—individuals should remain at least six feet from people from outside the individual's household to the extent feasible during the service, but also while entering and exiting. Creston will rope off every other row in the sanctuary.

Regarding Creston's staff and volunteers, Creston will:

1. Provide and require face masks or coverings.

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<sup>1</sup> Social/physical distancing of 6 feet is still necessary, even when wearing a face covering.

<sup>2</sup> Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html>

<sup>3</sup> Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

2. Require staff and volunteers to stay home if they are feeling ill—a fever in the last 72 hours, cough, or other symptoms—or have come in contact with anyone who has been sick in the last 14 days.
3. Maintain a minimum 6' distance between all volunteers and staff members including musicians.



Find Governor Whitmer's full plan here: [https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/0,9309,7-387-90499\\_90640-528453--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/0,9309,7-387-90499_90640-528453--,00.html)