

Regathering at Wake Forest Baptist Church

Love Does 

"We love because He first loved us." 1 John 4:19

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General Information

The Regathering Leadership Team continues to meet diligently to monitor current COVID-19 conditions in our area and make plans for appropriate measures to regather at the earliest possible date while being true to our ultimate goal of ensuring that health and safety not be at risk. The most important part of our plan is our own actions. Love for one another and a desire to practice safety is at the heart of our Christian witness. As such, we seek to minimize risk and trust one another to *“not grow weary in well doing”* (Galatians 6:9).

We are vastly aware that our church membership brings to this discussion a wide variety of opinions as to the best path forward. Some churches have been worshipping and some are not returning until 2021. Neither are right or wrong but they are hopefully discerning what is best for their particular congregation. For some it has worked well, while for others it has led to a premature outbreak of virus symptoms as a result.

The leadership team is composed of members with medical backgrounds, diaconate council members, leadership council members, Audio-Visual Team members, and an at-large member along with ministerial staff. Decisions and procedures that we make WILL change as community evidence changes and will, no doubt, cause frustrations as plans are cancelled or modified. Your patience and understanding is essential to our care of one another. **At present, given the continued high number of COVID-19 cases in our area, we believe it wise and caring to continue to follow local guidelines for gatherings in compliance with NC Phase 2 requirements.**

Current gathering limitations

With the **exception** of worship, funeral or wedding ceremonies, gatherings are limited to the following:

- Indoor gatherings in the Fellowship Hall and designated classrooms limited to 10 people
 - Classrooms A109, A110, A119 and A120 in the Adult Education Building can accommodate up to 10 people socially distanced and are the only classrooms available at this time.
- Outdoor gatherings under the Stephenson Campus Pavilion limited to 25 people

Protect Yourself and Those Around You

- Social distance by remaining at least 6 feet apart both indoors and outdoors when around others not within your immediate household
- Avoid contact with others and building surfaces where possible
- Practice good hygiene at all times (coughing/sneezing into elbow and washing hands)
- Please wear a mask covering your nose and mouth at all times (except for those 2 and under)
- Please perform self-check health screen prior to participating in any group event (check items will be provided with each sign up)
- Hand sanitizer should be provided when hand washing stations are not available

WFBC will encourage groups to use activity sign-up procedures to ensure we are managing number limitations and are able to contact those exposed should a participant test positive.

Self -Check Health Screen

Please answer these self-check health questions prior to attending:

Do you or anyone in your family...

- Have a fever above 100 degrees F?
- Have unexplained coughing or new loss of taste or smell?
- Have difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, or rapid breathing?
- Have any cold or flu-like symptoms (including any fever, cough, sore throat, respiratory illness, chills, body aches, headache, or runny nose)?
- Have an unexplained rash, swollen hands or feet, or red skin/eyes (particularly in children)?
- Not feel well or have unexplained tiredness?
- Have GI distress, nausea/vomiting and/or diarrhea?

IF you answer 'NO' to all of the above questions, please enjoy participating. IF you answered YES to any of those questions, we respectfully ask that you remain home.

Small Group Meeting Guidelines

With the **exception** of worship, funeral or wedding ceremonies, gatherings are limited to the following:

- Indoor gatherings in the Fellowship Hall and designated classrooms limited to 10 people
 - Classrooms A109, A110, A119 and A120 in the Adult Education Building can accommodate up to 10 people socially distanced and are the only classrooms available for use at this time.
- Outdoor gatherings under the Stephenson Campus Pavilion limited to 25 people

Process to submit a request to meet in a small group:

1. Contact Denise Stinson in the church office to submit request at least two weeks before you desired date
 2. Requests will go to the staff meeting for approval. Some requests may need to be filtered through the Regathering Team as well.
 3. You will be notified once your request has been approved
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Follow these guidelines specific to indoor gatherings:

1. Meetings limited to 45 minutes
2. No more than 10 participants
3. Use a sign up process to control group size
4. Provide self-check health screen and ask participants to complete before attending
5. Keep attendance for contact tracing
6. Open doors and/or windows
7. No sharing of materials, books, papers, pens etc
8. Masks **MUST** be worn the entire time
9. Enter and exit the building more than 6 feet apart. If your group is using multiple rooms, please stagger entry of groups by 10 minutes
10. Limit numbers in restrooms to 2 at a time
11. Require that once someone tests positive or develops symptoms they immediately report it to the group leader for follow up. Group leaders must report to the church office immediately. If it is after hours, please contact the minister on call.

Additional Information

- We are limiting rooms that are available for use. We will phase in additional spaces as the governor directs the state and we get practice and confidence in meeting safely.
 - When different groups share a common space we need a minimum of 8 hours between groups to clean and disinfect, so understand that the room(s) you request may not be available due to the timing of cleaning/sanitizing
 - Distance and duration continue to be the main methods of transmission so the longer people are together, the greater the chance of transmission regardless of distance and masks. The CDC defines an exposure as contact with an infected person within 15 minutes.
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Follow these guidelines specific to outdoor gatherings:

1. Meetings limited to 45 minutes
2. No more than 25 participants
3. Use a sign up process to control group size
4. Provide self-check health screen and ask participants to complete before attending
5. Keep attendance for contact tracing
6. Masks MUST be worn the whole time
7. Limit numbers in restrooms to 2 at a time at Stephenson Campus
8. No sharing of materials, books, papers, pens etc
9. Require that once someone tests positive or develops symptoms they immediately report it to the group leader for follow up

These guidelines are subject to change at any time. Please refer to our church website and 'Love Does' emails for updates.

Regathering FAQ

General

Q. Can we keep COVID-19 out of our church if we do all the right things?

A. No, we already have some who have tested positive.

Q. What's the Big Deal? Why do some make so much of this virus scare and some seem to feel we are REALLY silly and all of the precautions are unnecessary?

A. As is the case with most issues of concern, each of us know differing amounts of facts and come to the table with different capacities of how much threat we can afford for ourselves and our families. COVID-19 has caused and has the potential to cause a severe taxing on our healthcare system due to the severity of its symptoms. You may not exist in the type of work making these kinds of decisions, but we hope you can respect those who do and the decisions they are trying to make.

Q. Why would we reopen in stages?

A. Reopening in stages allows us to manage good infection control, keeps us all socially distant, and as safe as we know how to be.

Q. Will anyone be prohibited from attending?

A. Yes and no. We will share the CDC's recommendations for safety if you are of a certain age or have preexisting health conditions, but you can still choose what you want to do. While we will screen those returning for their exposure or testing, we will only prohibit a person who comes to church with obvious illness (chills, vomiting, etc.) but all are welcome to worship online.

Q. Why won't we be singing when we return, at least at first?

A. Singing projects droplets to a distance we are not yet comfortable with in potentially exposing others to our germs. Also since we are mandating masks, singing will be quiet and muffled at best but might allow for soft meditative singing as we follow along with the lyrics.

Information about Children

Q. Why won't there be children's church? Why can't we have Sunday Morning Bible

Study yet?

A. Children have a much harder time staying distant, functioning independently, and wearing masks. Since these are the three necessities in the stage we are in, we must have children's ministry wait a bit longer to begin so that we have much less COVID-19 to protect them from.

Q. Speaking of children, I heard that kids don't have anything to worry about with this virus. Is this true?

A. Some children are exhibiting severe symptoms that we have not seen in adults. Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) is a condition where different body parts can become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes, or gastrointestinal organs. We do not yet know what causes MIS-C; however, we know that many children with MIS-C had the virus that causes COVID-19 or had been around someone with COVID-19. MIS-C can be serious, even deadly, but most children who were diagnosed with this condition have gotten better with medical care. (CDC-2020)

General Prevention**Q. Why the emphasis on handwashing?**

A. Germs are always carried on our hands. We use our hands to touch many things including vulnerable places like our children or elderly parents/grandparents or our faces.

Q. Why are faces vulnerable?

A. Faces contain mucosal (moist) tissue like mouth, nose, and eyes facilitating quick transmission of bacteria or virus.

Q. Why are masks/face coverings helpful?

A. Covering one's nose and mouth when out and about does not protect the wearer but will help protect others by blunting any projection of air droplets that may contain the virus. Because none of us knows if we are carriers, we live as if we are infected and therefore we cover our faces in the event that we sneeze or cough or laugh, the projection of droplets won't travel far from us.

Q. Why aren't gloves mandatory?

A. We have natural gloves – skin (unless we have cuts or open places on our hands). Gloves are only helpful if someone has not washed their hands frequently such that the gloves are cleaner than their own skin, or if one is performing a sterile procedure (surgery, sterile dressing change) and the gloves are sterile. The PROBLEM with gloves is when we don't understand their use, and when we wear them for long periods without changing or washing them, we are falsely presuming safety for ourselves.

Q. If I have other medical conditions, am I more vulnerable?

A. Medical conditions that have suppressed one's immunity (cancer, organ transplant, etc.)

will make it easier for someone to catch any virus. If one's medical conditions make their care complicated normally (heart and/or lung, etc.) this may not make one more susceptible to getting the virus but certainly MAY make the course of the illness more complicated.

Q. What kinds of things can I do to help my immune system be as strong as possible?

A. The ways we help our bodies be the healthiest they can be are: SLEEP – get enough good quality sleep NUTRITION – consuming fresh fruits, vegetables, healthy grains, and water fuels our organs and cleanses some impurities from our system EXERCISE – physical exertion is essential for stress management and good cardiovascular health GRATITUDE – acknowledging all that we have to be grateful for honors God, reframes our current stress, and focuses our energies on our blessings which elevates natural endorphins BALANCE – maintain a healthy weight, omit alcohol, limit sugars, limit fats and salt, limit toxic relationships, limit screen time, limit toxic exposures (words, sights, chemicals) PRAYER – time in quiet reflection with God, self-meditation, and stillness can move our cognition to our higher order thinking, connecting us to God, stimulating problem solving, enhancing creativity SERVICE – activities (cards, calls, sewing, cooking, yardwork, food distribution) that remind us that our lives are not about ourselves but about our contribution to others is faithful to our tenets and actually boosts our T-cell (an immunity component) count STORYING – the REGULAR sharing of ourselves with others and the eliciting of stories from others creates a connection between us that can motivate, challenge, love, redeem, and heal.

Procedure for a Positive Covid-19 Test

Purpose: To describe the church's role when someone who recently attended a WFBC event tests positive for COVID-19

WFBC members are asked to screen themselves before coming to ANY church function, whether worship or small group gatherings. You may attend if you answer 'no' to ALL of the following.

Do you or anyone in your family...

- Have a fever above 100 degrees F?
- Have unexplained coughing or new loss of taste or smell?
- Have difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, or rapid breathing?
- Have any cold or flu-like symptoms (including any fever, cough, sore throat, respiratory illness, chills, body aches, headache, or runny nose)?
- Have an unexplained rash, swollen hands or feet, or red skin/eyes (particularly in children)?
- Not feel well or have unexplained tiredness?
- Have GI distress, nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea?

Members are asked not to attend any gathering if they are awaiting test results. Even with the best of screening, someone will eventually test positive after attending a WFBC gathering. **If a member tests positive for Covid-19 we ask that member to be in touch with our church office to report a positive COVID test result within three (3) days after attending a WFBC gathering.** After we have received this information the following steps will be taken:

1. The office personnel or designated person will explore with the caller if they had any close or sustained contact with anyone in particular. A plan will be made so that either the office person or the infected person will contact any close contacts with specifics and the person's name.
2. The office will contact via email, and/or phone call, all in attendance of that gathering to report the positive result. If the infected person gives permission to have their name revealed, the specifics will be included in the 'general' contact.
3. The message will convey that 'a person from X event has now tested positive for the COVID-19 virus' and 'to please seek testing and medical care as needed'.

We recommend that all persons quarantine for 14 days, as recommended by the CDC, if you were in close contact with the individual who tested positive. Seek medical attention as needed for symptoms or questions.

Covenant

As a covenant people, we commit to share responsibility for keeping one another safe. Our actions during this pandemic can knowingly AND unknowingly have impact on others. The purpose of this covenant is not to act as a governing document. Rather, this covenant serves as our pledge to follow these practices to protect others while attending Wake Forest Baptist Church gatherings, regardless of our circumstances and beliefs in our own personal lives.

As church members

- We will not come to any church campus if we have a fever, cough, or any other COVID symptoms.
- We will wear masks when we are together.
- We will keep 6 feet of distance between those not in our immediate household.
- We will encourage and support these practices with one another and with newcomers.

As church leadership and staff

- We will provide online and outdoor gatherings so that we can learn, worship, and fellowship in community safely.
- We will plan outdoor gatherings that are safe and inclusive for all ages able to attend.
- We will clean and sanitize after every gathering.
- We will avoid sharing any item and will offer alternatives to practices such as passing offering plates, communion elements and bulletins.
- We will limit attendance as necessary and record attendance for all on-campus gatherings

These practices will be effective until further notice.

Looking Ahead

We look forward to offering more shared worship experiences on the soccer field at the Stephenson Campus. As current circumstances in our community and state are ever changing, we will continue to monitor the information and guidance from our state to make informed decisions on where we go from here.

Continue to watch for further communication in the “Love Does” emails and on our website. WFBC guidelines on regathering are ever changing as we navigate this pandemic.

Thank you for your understanding, your respect for the diversity of our church, and your shared desire that we make health and safety our primary goal in these unique and challenging times. The church has not closed. Every day the mission of our church is being lived out in remarkable ways as we go “Beyond the Walls.” Philippians 2:2-4 continues to be a worthy standard for us all:

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others.”