



First Baptist Church

A Place to Belong

September 2, 2020

From Your Board and Pastors: First Baptist Re-Opening Plan

Beginning September 13th, First Baptist Regina will re-open its sanctuary for anyone who wishes to gather in person for worship.

We will be following health guidelines. See below for a description of Sunday morning precautions.

Zoom participants will continue to be fully included as part of Sunday morning worship at 11 a.m.

Whether to attend online or in person is an individual choice. By re-opening, we are not making a recommendation to anyone as to which they should choose. What matters most to your pastors and your board is that everyone knows they are cared for in every way—physically, spiritually, and mentally—and that they have a way to take part.

We will be careful, but we cannot eliminate all risk. The risk in Regina has remained low, but it is present. As well, we do not know what will happen after schools re-open nor what will happen when cold weather arrives. In that case, you may be wondering, why re-open at all? Because we believe in the importance of being together in person. God created us to be together. Jesus, himself, came to earth to be with us in person.

The Public Debate

I have undertaken a number of projects around my home over the years. Almost every time without fail I have been given conflicting advice by people who are confident and adamant that their way is correct. I remember being told three very different ways of installing fence posts. All insisted that, given Regina's clay soil, their way was the only scientific option. In the end, I had to choose – and live with that choice. Of course, our health is *much* more important than installing fence posts. But this is another situation where we must, in the midst of varying opinions and advice, make a choice.

Science rarely arrives quickly at answers that are as obvious and uncontested as we would like them to be. There are always debates and dissenting voices – that is how science works. We are witnessing such debates around medication, the accuracy of the data, and the value of the restrictions. And yet, with whatever information we have, we all must make the best choices possible. We can show grace to one another and be prepared to discover that we may have been wrong.

I personally believe that restrictions and caution are warranted. I know there are pastors in other churches who disagree. In my view, where governments have responded with early restrictions, the results have been lower rates of infection, less crowded hospitals, and fewer deaths. I did not see that as government overreach, but as responsible community leadership. Together as a province, we seem to be containing outbreaks and keeping infection rates low.

While these views on Covid-19 restrictions, risks, and the best response to the pandemic are my personal viewpoint, those on the board are comfortable with this view as well, and I share this with you for several reasons. First, to be transparent and open about my opinions because I could be mistaken. Second, to encourage continued precautions out of concern for everyone's wellbeing. Third, to encourage us to continue to be peacemakers in unsettled times. And finally, to those who are especially anxious about leaving their homes, to know that efforts are being made to keep the risk low.

All Things On Earth Are Being Reconciled to God Through Jesus

We have hope, always. God is in control and is moving everything toward a good end. Therefore, our allegiance is to Jesus. Jesus transcends today's politics and unites us. Jesus continues to care for us each day in a direct way. Make use of Pastor Richard's lessons on the spiritual disciplines to draw closer to God. Look for those times each day when God speaks to your heart or mind.

With love,

Pastor Joel

Rev. Joel Russell-MacLean, Lead Minister
Rev. John Nelson, Associate Minister
Rev. Dr. Richard Hovey, Associate Minister

Rev. Kayely Rich, Associate Minister
Chris Senger, Youth Pastor

2241 Victoria Avenue
Regina, SK S4P 0S4
Telephone: 306.359.1450

E-mail: main_fbcregina@sasktel.net
Website: www.firstbaptistregina.ca

Attending Worship Services During Covid-19: From The Outside In

We will use only the Victoria Avenue doors. To enter, please use the door that is furthest east. All other doors will remain locked. Please do not enter even if you have a key. (All doors will be clearly marked.)

The elevator door should be used exclusively by those needing to use the elevator. A greeter will be there to welcome and assist you.

Everyone will exit through the Victoria Avenue door that is furthest west.

Arrows on the floor and signs will provide directions in the building. The balcony will remain closed for the time being.

Upon entering, a greeter will be in the east foyer to welcome you.

Everyone over the age of eight will be asked to wear a mask the entire time they are in the building.

Everyone will wash their hands with sanitizer when they enter the building.

If you have Covid-19 symptoms, please take part through Zoom and get better soon! No one should attend if they have Covid-19 symptoms.

Children will remain with their families during the service for the time being. Those of us in the sanctuary miss the sound of children on Sunday. Those who come will be welcome!

Take your coats and belongings with you to your seat.

An offering plate will be placed by the door to the sanctuary as you enter.

Take a bulletin and a hymnal as you enter. Leave these in the pews when you leave.

A record of those in attendance plus contact information will be kept.

After the benediction, please exit while keeping two metres of distance from those outside your household bubble.

We will not be holding "Time For Friends" at present. We look forward to a time in the future when we will be able to enjoy this time of fellowship again.

We will be holding communion on September 13th with stations at the front of the sanctuary. Everyone will be invited forward down the east aisle and will return to their seat by the west aisle. Ushers and markers will insure that proper distances are kept.