

# ECC's Response to COVID-19 Precautions

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## August 13 Update

Beginning Sunday, August 23<sup>rd</sup>:

- In-person worship at 9:00\*\* & 11:00. The 11:00 service will be livestreamed. (\*\*Please note the change in time of the 1<sup>st</sup> service.)
- Children's programs for infants through 5<sup>th</sup> grade will be offered at 9:00 and 11:00.
- Children's programs will **not** continue between the services. Parents will need to pick up their children immediately following worship.
- Youth programs will meet at 9:00, with middle school in the Shack and high school in the chapel. High school Encounter will meet 6-8pm, with dinner served towards the end of the gathering.
- Two Adult Community Groups will be offered in person at 10:00am. One will be livestreamed and the other will be recorded and posted online. Learn more on the [ACG webpage](#).
- Those not participating in 10:00am Adult Community Groups are asked to promptly exit the building after worship in order to allow us to sanitize rooms and surfaces before the 11:00am hour.
- Connexion will resume on Sunday, August 30<sup>th</sup>. See [cnxn.life](#) for more info.
- We are following the state mandate to observe social distancing and require facial coverings.
- Hand sanitizer stations have been installed around the building.
- Restroom use is still limited to two people at a time.
- Bottled water is available in lieu of drinking fountains.

## July 27 Update

**Greetings folks,**

I want to provide you with some additional information on our planned re-opening. As you may remember we have decided to return to regular programming on August 23. This means that on August 23 we plan to return to our two service format but with some time changes. Here are some of the details listed below.

1. Our **new** worship service times will be **9:00** and 11:00 - 1st traditional, 2nd contemporary.
2. Between the two services, two ACGs will be offered in rooms not used by other ministries.
3. During the 9:00 and 11:00 hours the classrooms will be available for youth and children's programs.
4. Our new format allows for more available classroom spaces, thus more social distancing.
5. Between the 9:00 and 11:00 services we ask that everyone who is not attending an ACG to exit the building.
6. Your cooperation is important because sanitizing will take place between the two services.
7. Please continue to follow the 2-person limit in the restrooms.

8. According to the new Indiana mandate the wearing of face coverings is required.
9. Connexion will resume August 23 in the Sanctuary.
10. We will limit Sanctuary seating to 120 people - overflow seating will be arranged in the Gathering Space.

These are some of the details we have established at this time. Since things continue to evolve please know that all plans have the potential to change. We will keep you informed of any changes to our plan at every step. Hopefully we will be able to follow this plan and we certainly look forward to seeing all of you who feel comfortable coming to be with us on Sunday.

Grace and peace,  
Pastor Bob

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## May 22 Update

Greetings friends,

I hope all of you are doing well during the quarantine but I know many of you are anxious to return. Since a variety of public locations are carefully re-opening it seemed that we should provide you with an update on our plans. We plan to resume live worship services with a limited number of people on the first Sunday of June. We have prayerfully considered numerous details for opening our sanctuary for public worship. For the purpose of simplicity, the protocol for re-opening is listed below in a 15-point format, but let me first provide you with the context for our thinking.

We are aware that there are many opinions about how and when to gather in public worship. Some in our congregation are eager to return while others are approaching re-entry with extreme caution. It is important that all of us are charitable toward the wide variety of opinions. We acknowledge that it is confusing not because there is a lack of information but because there is so much information. The multiplicity of perspectives from national leaders and health care professionals is fascinating, polarizing and bewildering. Because of our current situation it seems that everyone has an opinion and everyone has become an expert. What are we supposed to do in times like these? I would suggest at least three things: 1) Listen charitably, 2) Study the data, 3) Pray for wisdom. This is what your leadership team has been attempting to do since the beginning of this outbreak.

As we have listened carefully it is clear that a consensus has emerged that we can affirm.

- 1) The virus is highly contagious and more dangerous than the common flu.
- 2) Large gatherings create a high risk environment for transmission.
- 3) The spread of the virus is significantly diminished by social distancing and face coverings.

Building upon that consensus we have constructed a plan for re-entry at ECC, listed below. As you consider the guidelines that have been established I would ask you to approach this issue without focusing on a loss of individual freedoms but instead by considering the needs of others. You may not be among those who are highly concerned about safety but many of your brothers and sisters are concerned. Out of respect and love for your neighbors we ask you to follow these guidelines for re-entry.

- 1) We plan to re-open on June 7th with a limit of 100 people – one service @ 10:00. We will continue livestreaming the service for those who choose to remain at home.
- 2) To ensure that no more than 100 attend we will post a worship registration sign-up on the ECC website
- 3) We will re-evaluate our situation weekly and monthly to consider adjustments
- 4) There will be no childcare, children's, youth or adult programming
- 5) We will distribute no printed worship bulletins – offering baskets will be placed at the exit doors
- 6) Multiple hand sanitizer stations will be available throughout the building
- 7) There will be a limit of 2 persons at a time in the restrooms
- 8) We encourage each person to bring their own face protection
- 9) If you do not have a mask, disposable masks are available and required in the building
- 10) Seating will be available in every other row with 4 seat spacing on available rows
- 11) There must be a minimum of 4 seats between individuals or family units
- 12) Pre-packaged communion elements will be available for those interested
- 13) Entrances and exits will be propped open to avoid touching door handles
- 14) We recommend senior citizens to exercise extreme caution and consider attending the online service options
- 15) Mid-week gatherings will be allowed but limited to 12 individuals with social distancing and face masks

We are aware that these guidelines will actually create more questions. Please feel free to reach out to us for further clarification. Also, during the worship services we will provide explanations and reminders as needed. We miss worship together but we continue to pray for all of you. Thank you for your patience during these difficult circumstances. We must continue to trust in our Good Shepherd, Great High Priest and Sovereign Lord who promises to work in all things for the good of those who love him. “Nothing can separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Grace and peace,

Pastor Bob

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## March 20 Update

Dear Church Family,

I am writing with an update related to activities at ECC. No doubt many of you watched our livestreamed worship service on Sunday. Please spread the word that we will be live again this Sunday at 10:00. This Sunday we will move our “broadcast” to the sanctuary so that it feels more like we are all together in a familiar space for worship. If you are not able to [watch the broadcast live](#), we will have a recording following the service that will be posted on our [YouTube channel](#).

Next week we will add several new features to keep us connected. First, there will be a live broadcast of a devotional moment at noon every weekday on our [YouTube channel](#). This will include Scripture reflection, song and prayer. We have received many prayer requests from you and we are

taking those seriously. Second, we are planning to post a [devotional reading](#) on our website each day for those who would like to read it. These devotionals will be written by the ECC staff, elders and others who have been asked to be part of this project.

As you may be aware we are attempting to stay in contact with the entire congregation by dividing up our church directory into groups of names. No doubt many of you have received an email or phone call from an elder, deacon or member of the church staff. Hopefully this will be an encouraging point of contact with the church leadership. Please let us know if you have particular needs and we will do our best to assist. If you have not yet been contacted and would like us to keep in touch in this way, let us know.

Finally, I want to remind you that online giving is available to all of you who visit our website. In the past many of you have given generously through our regular offertory during the worship services. Since this option is no longer available please remember that you can still send checks in the mail or give online. To give online, simply go to [eccbloomington.org](http://eccbloomington.org) and click on the "Giving" tab. A PayPal account is not required; you will also see the option to give with your debit or credit card. Online gifts are the most effective way to ensure that your gift is promptly available to ECC in these present circumstances.

Thank you for staying in touch with us because our staff is still working to provide any resources that you need. We are living through difficult and unprecedented circumstances but the body of Christ is doing what it has done for centuries – studying the Scriptures, praying, worshipping and encouraging one another to love and good deeds.

***Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*** (Colossians 3:16-17)

Grace and peace,

Pastor Bob

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## March 15<sup>th</sup> Update

In-person worship on March 22<sup>nd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> has been cancelled. Please join us online instead for a livestream at 10:00am, which can be found on our website ([eccbloomington.org](http://eccbloomington.org)), YouTube ([eccbloomington](#)), or Facebook ([@eccbloomington](#)).

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## March 13<sup>th</sup> Update

Greetings folks,

Considering the fast-paced developments in our health crisis we have decided to cancel our worship service this Sunday morning. We will have a virtual option for all of you who go to our website at eccbloomington.org at 10:00am on Sunday. Please take time to do this because we would like to provide more information related to our decisions. The Board of Elders will be meeting to discuss next steps. We appreciate your patience, pray for your safety and wish you God's blessings.

Grace and peace,

Bob

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## March 12<sup>th</sup> Letter

Dear Church Family,

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Elders and the ECC church staff concerning changes that relate to rapidly evolving events in our community and around the world. As you are aware, we are facing an international health crisis that is affecting our life together. The Board and church staff have been in conversation about best practices to put in place during this fast-moving situation.

Several days ago, Indiana University released a statement that cancelled all classes following spring break for at least two weeks. As a result, our town will look significantly different until at least the first week of April. Our student population at ECC may reflect a non-academic calendar for the foreseeable future. In the past we have routinely scheduled only one service (10:00) during the holidays, spring break, and summer months. Prompted by these recent changes we have decided to extend our one service schedule (10:00) until at least the end of March. Additionally, we are immediately making a variety of other scheduling changes listed below.

- Only one service at 10:00 a.m. for the next three weeks
- No adult, youth, or children's programming during the worship service
- We will provide childcare for preschool age and younger.
- Connexion will be cancelled during the month of March
- All Bible studies and other group meetings that meet at ECC will be cancelled for March
- Mid-week music rehearsals (choir and band) will be cancelled during the month of March
- Our worship service will be live-streamed on our website and/or ECC Facebook page
- Offering baskets and worship bulletins will be placed at the back of the sanctuary
- We advise that you follow sanitary protocol, such as hand washing and not shaking hands, etc.
- Finally, we are requesting that you stay home if you are ill

Since these events are moving very rapidly it is difficult to respond perfectly. No doubt our decisions will be questioned by many with "why this and not that" questions. Imperfect as we are, please know that we have carefully and prayerfully considered these and other changes.

We appreciate your patience as we continue to adapt to our new reality. More changes and modifications to these arrangements are likely to be forthcoming, so we will stay in touch with you by email, social media, and our website at [eccbloomington.org](http://eccbloomington.org). Also, we strongly advise that you follow the recommendation of health professionals, especially the [guidelines produced by the CDC](#).

Although our current circumstances no doubt produce fear for many, we can be confident that our God is sovereign over all the affairs of humanity. We ask that you pray for the world and national leaders so that they will be guided by the hand of God to make wise decisions on behalf of us all. Also, pray for the church around the world that God's grace will surround them as they minister to others.

Grace and peace,

Bob Whitaker  
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