

Mound Evangelical Free Church Gathering Plan

We exist “to be and make disciples of Jesus Christ.”

Our vision is “To glorify God by being a gospel-centered church family that celebrates, demonstrates, and communicates the good news of Jesus Christ among all people.”

Guidelines for gathering:

Length and Nature of the Worship Gathering

- As a reminder, a biblical Sunday gathering includes: Prayer, Word, Singing, Ordinances, Offering, Expressions of fellowship, Benediction. We remain committed to obeying God by participating in these activities when corporately gathered.
- We may adjust the length of the gathering to reduce time and potential exposure.

Christian Love

As we gather again, let's consider and commit to the following:

- This strange and difficult season is one more opportunity among many in God's providence for us to mature in exercising genuine love for God and others (Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 12:9ff; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7). God loved us first and will help us to love each other and our neighbors. Jesus Christ modeled love, a humble laying down of himself to sacrificially serve others (Mark 10:42-45; Philippians 2:1-11).
- Every ethical choice and action we make involves the heart (beliefs, desires, and intent), the moral rightness or wrongness of the act itself, and the results (seen and unforeseen) of the action. “We should love our neighbor” is true; yet, each of us might exercise love in different directions. As we move from individual ethics to group ethics, the complexities compound. Let's be patient with one another as numerous decisions arise. Let's grow as a church family of biblical counselors. Don't assume the heart motivations of others (1 Corinthians 4:5; 13:7). Be quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19).
- On the conscience: read Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8-9. **Please watch** Jonathan Leeman and Andy Naselli on [COVID-19 and the Crisis of the Christian Conscience](#).
 - Here are a few realities for us to recognize and consider:
 - Our church family has members who are vulnerable to COVID-19; and members who work in health care conditions connected to COVID-19.
 - Members have beliefs and concerns across the spectrum.
 - Our American culture is one of increasing polarization.
- So let's be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3).

Occupancy

- Occupancy of the “sanctuary” is 360.
 - 50% of max occupancy = 180
- Occupancy of “fellowship hall” is 77 with tables or 164 with chairs only.
 - 50% of max occupancy = 38 (tables) / 82 (chairs)

As of June 10, 2020, according to the State of Minnesota, occupancy must not exceed 50% of total occupancy, with a maximum of 250 people in a single self-contained space.

To attend or not to attend?

- Please screen yourself and those in your family before deciding to attend.
- Please stay home if you or a family member are experiencing any flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell.).
- If you are more vulnerable and at greater risk of complications to COVID-19, please use wisdom about attending gatherings. Those who are more vulnerable include:
 - People 65 and older
 - People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
 - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - People who have serious heart conditions
 - People who are immunocompromised
 - People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
 - People with diabetes
 - People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
 - People with liver disease

For those who don't attend, we will provide a live, remote option (e.g. Zoom, Facebook or YouTube Live)

Social Distancing

- Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between households.
- Sit in blocked off seating arrangements.
- Please refrain from physical contact, such as shaking hands and hugging. Instead, wave and smile!
- Don't wait in lines or huddles.

Hygiene

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Refrain from touching your face.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow.
- If comfortable and your conscience permits, wear a face covering or mask.
- Seek to touch as few surfaces as possible while in the building.

Moving Into and Out of Spaces

- Use common sense to reduce traffic and crowding at entrances, in hallways, on the stairs, in waiting areas, and at doorways.
- The external doors will be propped open or opened for you by a designated greeter.
- As much as possible, we will leave internal doors open.
- Use common sense when entering and exiting the seating area.

Children

- For a time, there will be no nursery or children's church.
- Children need to stay with their families during the gathering.
- We may make the downstairs rooms available for families with younger children. Each room may be used by one household. We currently have video feed to 2 rooms.
- If you'd like to use downstairs space, due to family wants with younger children, please contact the elders.

Seating

- Seating will be provided in assigned household "huddles" in the sanctuary and in fellowship hall. Signs with household names will be attached to each seating huddle.
- There will be seating huddles designated for visitors.
- We may use overflow space through use of the rooms downstairs.
- If, after 10 minutes into the worship gathering" a seating "huddle" is vacant you may move into a "huddle" assigned to someone else.
- If you do not feel comfortable coming into the building but would like to be on site, you may prefer to remain outside the building, either in your car or seated outside. We will provide a live feed of the service that you can tune into on your device.

Bulletins, Hymns, & Bibles

- Bulletins will be placed on the seat of each chair.
- Additionally, a digital order of service, sermon notes and community group study questions, and song lyrics will be provided on the main page of the church website. Announcements and other bulletin information will continue to be available through the weekly MEFC newsletter.
- Hymnals will not be provided. All words to songs will be on the screen and on the mainpage of the MEFC website.
- Bibles will not be provided. Bring your own Bible.

Lord's Supper

- Whoever prepares and handles the elements will wear a mask and gloves.
- The Supper will be served at tables spread throughout the sanctuary, to reduce crowding.
- The elements will be available in individual containers that are easily grasped, without contacting other elements.
- As available, hand sanitizer will be at each table.

Offering plate

- If you plan to give towards the offering, you may do so after the service as you exit - a plate will be available near the door.

Bathrooms

- Use common sense to limit the number of people in the restroom at the same time.
- Don't wait for the restroom in the hallway between the two bathroom entrances.

Food and Beverages

- For the time being, there will be no on-site distribution of food and beverages.
- You may bring your own drinks (e.g. water, coffee, tea) in closed containers.
- The water fountain is not available for use.
- The kitchen is closed. Please do not enter. Let's keep it sanitized for Wednesday meals.

Cleaning and Sanitation

- See state guidance: "Work and Gathering Space Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols".
- Volunteers may help clean before or after the service. If interested, please contact Kevin Johansen (Trustee 952-491-1464) or Greg Galler (custodian 952-594-1609).

Use of the Building Beyond Sunday Worship

- The MEFC building will be available for church family gatherings and events upon request. Please contact Jolene Lund, our church administrator, to make arrangements. She can be reached at info@moundfree.org or 952-472-2779.
- Events hosted at the MEFC building must not exceed the capacity limits set out in the "Occupancy" section listed above.
- External groups may submit requests to elders and deacons, via the church administrator, for approval to meet.
- Please follow the guidelines laid out above in the "Social Distancing", "Hygiene", "Moving Into and Out of Spaces", "Bathrooms", and "Food and Beverages" sections.

State of Minnesota Guidelines: Stay Safe MN

The State of Minnesota has issued the following guidelines (see <https://staysafe.mn.gov/>) for "Places of Worship, religious services, weddings, and funerals":

"Indoors and Outdoors Capacity: 6 feet of social distance, max 50%, maximum of 250 people within a single self-contained space – see guidance for additional details
Masks: Strongly recommended for workers and attendees"

For more information see the State of Minnesota document: "INDUSTRY GUIDANCE FOR SAFELY REOPENING: FAITH-BASED COMMUNITIES, PLACES OF WORSHIP, WEDDINGS, AND FUNERALS" (https://mn.gov/deed/assets/worship-guidance-ACC_tcm1045-433301.pdf)