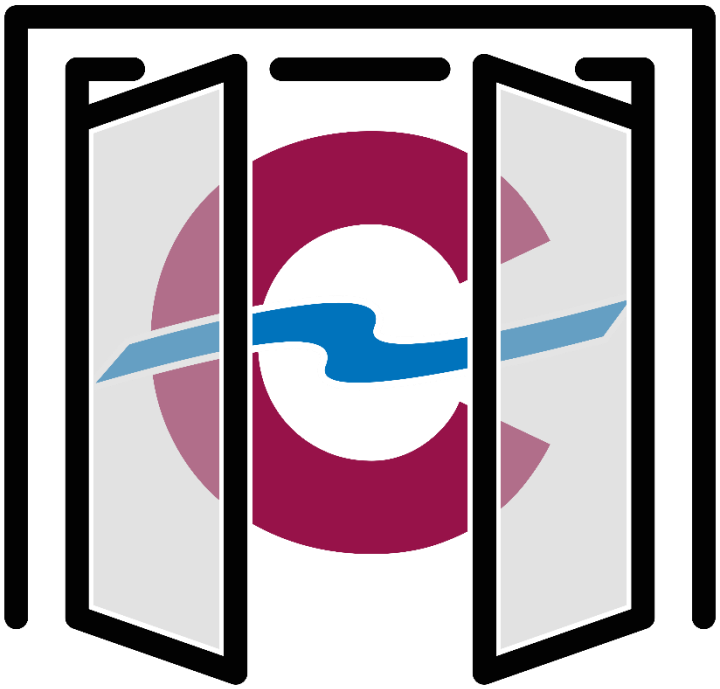

# REOPENING:
# PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

CREEKSIDE CHURCH | URBANDALE, IOWA | MAY 2020

Version 5

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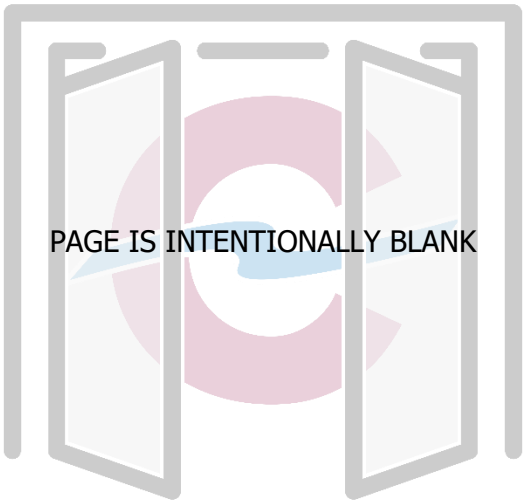
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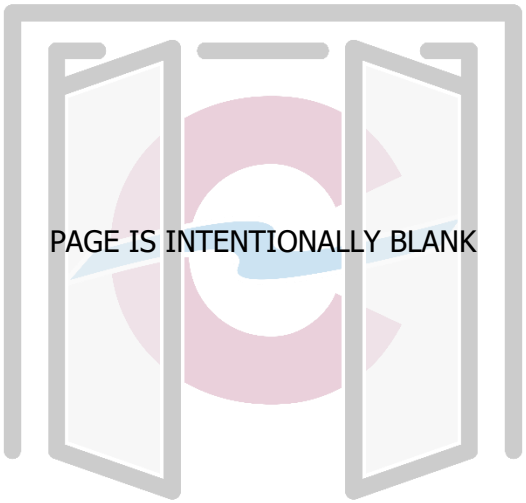

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# Introduction

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Lord willing, it appears we are nearing the end of this time of isolation and quarantine. In response to the recent proclamation by the Governor of the State of Iowa we have prayerfully considered the manner in which Creekside can reopen its doors while meeting public health recommendations[1].

As the virus is still a public health concern, our activities will need to look different than what we are used to for the time being. While we are eager to return to normalcy it would not be prudent to do so in one step. We are following the recommendations advised by both the Federal and State health departments as we believe that this is the best manner to show love to one another[2] and to our neighbors who may wish to visit in the aftermath of this pandemic.

We recognize that Creekside is one body; a singular entity made of parts arranged individually by God[3]. This means that what we go through as a church we go through as if we were one body. It is because of this fact that we have implemented guidelines and protocols that will allow the entire body to gather, regardless of age or risk level. We understand that not everyone in every risk group will want to return. For those in higher-risk categories, the best option remains to worship with us online and we encourage you to continue doing so. However, if you are in a higher-risk group and would like to gather at the church we will have additional precautions in place.

Because we are striving to include all members through this return to 'normalcy' we would like to ask for your cooperation during the initial stages of this reopening. These initial stages are more restrictive than we all are used to and Sunday morning will look different than it did before the outbreak. These measures are meant to be temporary. We appreciate your help in working toward keeping our congregation united in worship while also demonstrating love by helping to protect higher-risk neighbors and show care for one another[4].

During this challenging time, please reach out the Elders and Deacons with any questions you may have regarding these guidelines. We are united in our commitment see this flock bring glory to God and to lead people everywhere to a devoted relationship with Jesus Christ.

"*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*" Romans 15:13

In Christ,

Your Elders and Deacons

---

[1] Romans 13:1-3 "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities…"
[2] Leviticus 19:18b, Luke 10:27, Romans 13:9-10
[3] 2 Corinthians 12:12-20
[4] 2 Corinthians 12:25b

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# I. Definitions

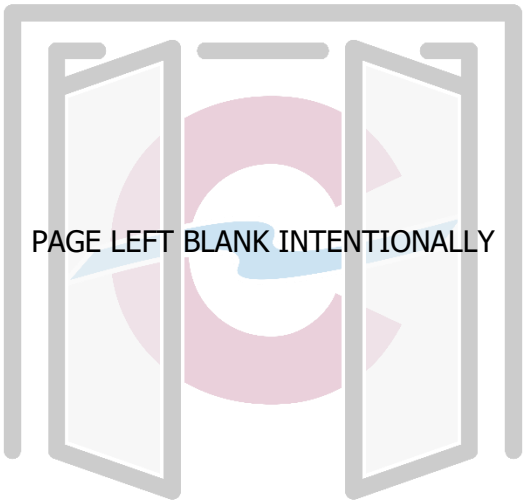
These terms within this document, as defined below, are strictly for the purpose of defining Creekside Church's best practices to curtail the spread of contagions within the church facility. The intent not to exclude *higher-risk* members of Creekside Church from recognition as such.

*congregants*
Members and visitors of Creekside Church and their children

*common surfaces*
Are defined as surfaces that are touched by more than one individual on a frequent basis. These would include, but are not limited to, door handles, sink knobs, sink spouts, and bathroom stall handles. For purpose of clarity within this document, frequent means more than one use per hour.

*higher-risk*
As defined by the CDC's guidelines, are members and visitors at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are:

1. People 65 years and older
2. People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
3. People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:
4. People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
5. People who have serious heart conditions
6. People who are immunocompromised
    a. Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
7. People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
8. People with diabetes
9. People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
10. People with liver disease



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# II. Guidelines for Reopening Creekside Church

The guidelines being implemented by Creekside meet the standards laid out by the state and federal governments which can be found here:

1. Iowa – https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus/Public . Click on the "Religious Facilities and Places of Worship Guidance" link.
2. Federal - https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/#guidelines

The guidelines implemented at Creekside may become more or less stringent then described below to accommodate changes to state and federal public health recommendations.

The primary and most obvious guideline is if you or any in your family are feeling ill PLEASE STAY HOME. Secondly please remember to observe physical distancing by refraining from hugging, handshaking, or other forms of physical contact.

Below are descriptions of the guidelines to be implemented. Refer to the table in the Phasing Schedule section for when these stages would be implemented and removed. Words that are in bold correspond to labels in the table. Words in *italics* are defined in Section I.

1. **Activities – Cancelled or Delayed**
    a. AWANA – follows school schedule and will resume when public schools reopen unless directed differently by the AWANA program.
    b. Middle School/High School Youth – follows school schedule and will resume when public schools reopen.
    c. Men's/Women's Bible Studies
        i. Creekside will provide and set up for these groups at Creekside; these spaces will be indicated in a conspicuous manner. Chairs to be arranged in a circle with separation of at least 8'-0" apart center of chair to center of chair.
    d. Small Groups
        i. Groups less than ten may meet at the church for small groups. Reasonable measures are to be taken to physically distance attendees. Individuals desiring to utilize Creekside for this purpose are asked to reach out to Megan or the Deacons before the space is needed so that setup and sanitization can be completed.
    e. Sunday School will not resume until Phase III
    f. After Phase III - Activities resume as normal, no additional protocols
2. **Bathrooms – Enhanced Hygiene**
    a. All *congregants* may use the public restrooms. Those who do so are asked to take reasonable precautions in order to distance themselves from vulnerable individuals who may also be using the space.
    b. Creekside will implement cleaning of *common surfaces* every Sunday morning prior to the commencement of services.
    c. Gloves will be provided for a single use during the restroom visits. Use is limited to restrooms. Trash receptacles are provided to dispose of gloves after restroom visit is completed. Trash bags will be emptied after each service.

    d. Restrooms in the preschool area are to be used by *higher-risk* individuals only.
3. **Building – Single Direction Traffic Flow**
    a. The south door, preschool entry, becomes the *higher-risk* persons entrance. Creekside will install signage to this effect. Parking near this entry will be reserved for *higher-risk* individuals.
    b. Main entrance will be for *congregants*, except for those in the *higher-risk* group. Separate entries are necessary to attempt to prevent spread of the virus by minimizing the amount of *common surfaces* various risk groups touch; it is also an attempt to minimize the amount of times various risk groups com into the close proximity of a hallway or vestibule.
    c. Either the exit to the playground through the fellowship hall or the main entrance will be used by Congregants. Ushers will direct you to the appropriate exit. During Orderly Dismissal and Partial Orderly Dismissal individuals in the *higher-risk* group will be dismissed from the fellowship hall first.
4. **Bulletins – Not Provided**
    a. Paper bulletins will not be printed or distributed.
5. **Collections Station**
    a. Collection bags will not be passed. An offering box will be provided at entries for offerings to be collected in. Online giving is encouraged.
6. **Connect Service**
    a. During Phase I only the Connect service will be implemented. Refer to Collections, Orderly Dismissal, Rites, and Worship Hall for other elements of this service and their protocols.
    b. Worship Team
        i. During Phase I and subsequent phases a limited worship team will be utilized consisting of volunteers. The number will be limited to an amount that will allow for appropriate distancing between individuals on the stage.
7. **Entry – Enhanced Hygiene**
    a. Hand sanitizing stations will be installed at building entries. *Congregants* and visitors will be asked to use this prior to entering the building.
    b. Greeters will wear face masks.
    c. Masks, as they become available, will be offered to those who would like one. Trash receptacle are provided to dispose of the masks before leaving the building. These trash bags will be emptied after each service.
    d. Entrance handles will be cleaned after each opening. Where feasible, greeters will open the door for all *congregants* and visitors. On days where weather permits, the outer doors will remain open with the inner doors operated by greeters.
8. **Fellowship Hall**
    a. The Fellowship Hall is a clean room for *higher-risk* individuals. This is due to it's ability to be separated from adjoining spaces by easily operable doors and the fact that the chairs installed in this room are plastic and easily sanitized.
    b. During Phase I only, the sliding glass doors and glass swinging doors to fellowship hall will be closed at all times. During Phase II and on the sliding glass door will be open to the worship hall.
    c. Chairs will be cleaned every Sunday morning prior to commencement of services by volunteers.

9. **Nursery - Closed**
    a. Nursery will be closed for at least Phase I due to the difficulty of implementing physical distance with these age groups and to protect volunteers.
10. **Orderly Dismissal**
    a. *Congregants* are asked to remain seated after the service to allow greeters time to get back to their stations. Clusters will then be dismissed and exit. Upon the exit from the room of one cluster, the next cluster will be dismissed. The high-risk group in the fellowship hall will be dismissed first.
    b. All congregants are asked to exit through the Fellowship Hall to the playground in the back.
    c. *Congregants* are asked to refrain from gathering in the entry or fellowship halls. They are additionally asked to utilize the lawn space in front or back of the building to greet one another while leaving enough room for others to leave the facility with appropriate physical distances.
    d. Partial Orderly dismissal will be implemented in later phases to allow those who would like to leave before the rest of the congregation to do so. The remainder of the congregation will leave afterwards.
11. **Refreshments – Not Provided**
    a. Refreshments will not be served in order to prevent spread of contagions by many users touching *common surfaces* such as coffee carafe handles, spoons, creamer pitchers.
12. **Remember Service – Postponed**
    a. During Phase I the Remember service will not be implemented. This is due to the necessity of working through unforeseen complexities that will arise with keeping to physical distancing and hygiene guidelines.
13. **Remember Service - Limited**
    a. During Phase II, the Remember service will be implemented in a limited way. In order to minimize the spread of any contagions, *congregants* who attend the Remember Service in the fellowship hall are asked to retain the same seat for both the Connect and Remember services.
        i. During the time between services *congregants* are asked to maintain physical distances from one another by using the field or cement patio in the back of the building.
        ii. Chairs will be set up facing the stage for use during both services.
        iii. Communion will take place as described below.
14. **Rites**
    a. Phase I
        i. Communion
            1. Initially, *congregants* are asked to bring Communion emblems from home for their family to partake of during service. Options to distribute prepacked communion emblems are being explored.
        ii. Baptism
            1. Conducting baptisms will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
    b. Phase II
        i. Communion

1. Precut/poured emblems will be provided by Creekside. These will be distributed to multiple stations located throughout the worship hall and one will be in the fellowship hall.
2. Clusters of families will be dismissed by designated Safety Team, Deacons, or Elders (or other volunteers) in an orderly manner so that adequate distances can be maintained. When one cluster is finished the next one will be dismissed.

ii. Baptism
1. Conducting baptisms will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

c. Phase III
i. Communion
1. Communion resumes as normal. *Congregants* are asked to maintain adequate distances from the people in front of them in line.

ii. Baptism
1. Baptism will resume to pre-pandemic practice.

15. **Virtual Church**
    a. Online distribution of services via YouTube and Free Online Church will be continued.
16. **Worship Hall – Layout Changes**
    a. Chairs in the worship hall will be reduced by 50% and spread out in an arrangement yet to be determined.
    b. Chair rows spaced 7'-0" center of chair to center of chair in N/S (stage to sound booth) direction.
    c. Clusters will be provided within the space of various sizes: 6 (family), 4 (young family), and 2. Each cluster spaced 7'-0" edge of chair to edge of chair. Chairs within each cluster are set up with the same as normal spacing. *Congregants* are asked to utilize clusters based on their family size and not take a larger section than they would need.
    d. The square tables in Worship hall will be removed from space and stored until resumption of services.

# III. Phasing Schedule

Creekside is implementing a phased reopening consistent with public health guidelines from the State and Federal governments. A return to normal services will be accomplished over four phases. The dates given for each phase will be updated based on governmental polices, especially if more stringent policies are enacted at state or federal levels.

Phase One: May 15, 2020 –
at least May 27, 2020
Phase Two: To be determined
Phase Three: To be determined

It is expected that after Phase Three that Creekside services and activities will return to normal as allowed by state and federal guidelines.

The chart on the next page indicates which phase each of the guidelines will be implemented. This is a preliminary schedule which will be modified as needed to reflect updates to public health directives. Refer to the Section II for outlines of each guideline.

**Chart Key:**

'■' indicates that the item is being implemented during this phase.

'□' Indicates implementation is to be determined

Blank columns indicate guideline is not implemented.

| Guideline from Section II | Phase | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1. Activities - Cancelled or Delayed[5] | | | |
| a) AWANA - Cancelled | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| b) Middle School/High School - Cancelled | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| c) Men's/Women's Bible Studies - Limited | ■ | ■ | |
| d) Small Groups - Limited | ■ | ■ | |
| e) Sunday School - Cancelled | ■ | □ | |
| 2. Bathrooms – Enhanced Hygiene | ■ | □ | |
| a) Separate higher-risk Entry | ■ | □ | |
| 3. Building – Single Direction Traffic Flow | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 4. Bulletins – Not Provided | ■ | □ | |
| 5. Connect Service | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 6. Collections Station | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 7. Entry – Enhanced Hygiene | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 8. Fellowship Hall | ■ | ■ | □ |
| 9. Nursery - Closed | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 10. Orderly Dismissal | ■ | ■ | |
| a) Partial Orderly Dismissal[6] | | | ■ |
| 11. Refreshments – Not Provided | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 12. Remember Service - Postponed[7] | ■ | | |
| 13. Remember Service - Limited | | ■ | ■ |
| 14. Rites | | | |
| 13 (a)(i) Communion-Phase I Limits | ■ | | |
| 13 (a)(ii) Baptism-Phase I Limits | ■ | | |
| 13 (b)(i) Communion-Phase II Limits | | ■ | |
| 13 (b)(ii) Baptism-Phase III Limits | | ■ | |
| 13 (c)(i) Communion-Phase III Limits | | | ■ |
| 13 (c)(ii) Baptism-Phase III Limits | | | ■ |
| 15. Virtual Church | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| 16. Worship Hall – Layout Changes | ■ | ■ | □ |

[5] Refer to section II for process by which activities will resume
[6] Refer to section II, 'Orderly Dismissal' subsection 'c'.
[7] Refer to section II for descriptions of "Remember Service–Postponed" and "Remember Service–Limited"

# Appendix A: Diagrams of Space Use During Phases

The terms used in the following diagrams carry the same meanings defined in Section I.

Phase One

Phase Two

Phase Three

3

CONGREGANTS AREA
HIGHER-RISK AREA
HIGHER RISK ENTRY PATH
CONGREGANTS ENTRY PATH