

Austinville Christian Reformed Church
31871 2nd Street
Austinville, IA 50608

May 20, 2020

Galatians 5:13-14

¹³You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Dear Congregation,

The past few months have been unlike anything any of us have ever experienced. All of us have had our lives impacted by COVID-19 in different ways and the lasting effects will be with us for some time. No one knows for sure what the future holds but we as God's people know in Whose hands that future is held. The ever changing landscape created by this virus make it difficult to plan ahead with any real certainty but after careful consideration and much prayer the council of Austinville CRC has decided to move forward with a plan to reopen for in person worship. With strict adherence, when possible, to the CDC and Iowa Dept. of Health guidelines we propose the following plan for a return to worship.

- 1) While we are all excited to meet in person once again, we ask that all attendees adhere to the guidelines for social distancing that have been recommended by the CDC. Please try to maintain 6-foot distance, avoid physical contact (ie. handshakes, hugs, high-fives, holy kisses), and sit in areas designated by masking tape and only with members from your household.
- 2) Masks are welcome and encouraged. If you have a mask please bring yours to wear during the service, if you choose not to wear a mask that is okay as well.
- 3) We will have some hand sanitizer available for use but feel free to bring your own if you prefer.
- 4) Weather permitting, we will be meeting outdoors at the Voss Studios pond just down the block from the church. If weather does not allow for us to meet outdoors, we will notify the congregation of any changes by Friday evening.
- 5) Until further notice there will be no childcare offered in the basement during worship services. I (Pastor Norm) know all too well the difficulties presented by having an energetic child in worship with you. Children may not be the best at adhering to social distancing guidelines but we know that parents with small children will make the decision that is best for their family. Coffee fellowship and Sunday School are also on hold for the foreseeable future. At this time our evening service is also on hold until further notice.
- 6) We will not be passing the offering plates as a part of our service. A table will be set up with the plates for you to drop your offering as you enter or exit.
- 7) Please avoid stopping and gathering in common areas such as the entry way and lobby. We ask that you enter the building and head immediately to your seats to avoid congestion. The same is asked of you as you leave the building. We want you to engage in conversation but please do so outside in the parking lot.
- 8) Members of council will serve as ushers during this time and help seat individuals in the designated areas. As people arrive, they will be seated towards the front of the sanctuary and

fill in the seats toward the back as more people arrive. Those closest to the exit will be dismissed first by an usher. These steps are in place to avoid overlap and make the seating process as smooth as possible.

- 9) We will not have Bibles or Hymnals available for use. If you have either of these and would like to have them for use during the service please feel free to bring yours from home.
- 10) Perhaps most importantly if you or anyone in your household feels ill please remain at home. Individuals who do not feel comfortable attending in person or are in the “at risk” category are encouraged to remain at home as well. While we desire to see everyone in person again, we understand that not everyone is ready to venture out and potentially put themselves or others at risk. For this reason, we will be recording our services to have available online by Sunday evening.
- 11) Please note that the sanctuary and church building will be cleaned and sanitized to the best of our ability between services for your safety.

We feel the above recommendations are the best way we can move safely and responsibly toward in person worship and something that looks “normal”. We also feel that this is the most loving way we can meet the needs of you, our congregation. Weather permitting our first in-person service will be held by the Voss Studios pond on Pentecost Sunday, May 31st at 9:30am.

In your humble service,
ACRC Council