

CBCNH Reopening Policy¹

I. Framing the Process of Church Reopening:

Here, at the Calvary Baptist Church of New Haven, we take seriously the command of *not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some* [Heb. 10:25], while also taking seriously the command of loving one another through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [1 John 4:7]. The reopening policy set forth here in these pages expresses our corporate and earnest desire to be faithful to both, by looking ahead to communal life beyond quarantine and by prioritizing the health and safety of each of our parishioners.

As medical health workers and state policymakers advise, this reopening policy is largely based upon such expert opinions, and thus it is amenable to change. In addition, subcommittee members have made their own valuable contributions, and, by virtue of their representative voices, the broader concerns of each fellowship group have also been taken into close consideration. Finally, the policy itself is the fruit of collaborative efforts among the members of the reopening subcommittee. However, any final approval - with respect to its contents, implementation, and future amendments - will come from Calvary's elected officials [i.e. BOT and BOD].

II. General Schema of Phased Reopening:

A. Phased Reopening for Sunday Worship: Rather than resuming our operations all at once, CBCNH will go about doing so in a *gradual* manner, otherwise known as phased reopening.²

1. Reentrance will *generally* begin with members who are at lowest risk [youth, english, and campus], to members who are at medium risk [middle-aged persons who are 45 to 65], to then members who are at highest risk [senior citizens who are 65 and older].

¹ Readers must keep in mind that this reopening policy merely offers guiding principles as well as a general framework for church reopening. It is *not* within the nature of this policy to provide specific procedures, reopening dates, purchase items, and so forth. The policy itself is meant to be versatile in relation to the ongoing covid-19 pandemic, and thus it cannot predetermine many of the things people may otherwise expect a reopening policy to normally have predetermined. Such decisions will need to be made later on, by the appropriate people at the appropriate time.

² Fellowship group leaders will need to determine their own unique policies that are in compliance with the general reopening policy, which then must be approved by the BOT members.

a. In the event *youth group* families would like to and are able to worship together, and it does not violate any of the subsequent policy guidelines, they are allowed to do so.

2. Calvary's elected officers will adjudicate and authorize all official reentrance dates. In this process, officers will consult with the parishioners most immediately affected, while basing their final decisions upon the prevailing opinions of the medical, health, and legal experts.

B. Rescheduling Service Times: Once the final stages of reopening have been reached, worship coordinators will reschedule and sufficiently space apart the service times for Chinese and English worship.

C. New Format: For the foreseeable future, CBCNH will maintain a hybrid format of in-person and online worship services in order to accommodate a wide variety of concerns as well as unique domestic circumstances, such as children who are living with grandparents.

D. Implement Group System: Upon their approval for reentry, all fellowship groups will have established by a later date an alternating group system to avoid transgressing the new occupancy limits [see below III.C].³

E. Compliance: Whatever each fellowship group may decide with respect to their own internal policies, they must stand in compliance with the general reopening policy of the church, including its health and safety measures.

III. Boundaries, Occupancy Limits, and Use of Space:

A. Use of Space: With the exception of youth ministry, church facilities will only be available for Sunday service. The facilities will remain closed for all Friday night fellowship group activities until further notice.

1. If there is any flexibility to this, it'll depend on: how the situation has progressed; whether or not there is leadership approval; and whether or not VII.A will not be violated.

B. Boundaries: Apart from the sanctuary, second floor common area, and downstairs fellowship hall, all other rooms within the church shall remain off-limits.

³ An alternating group system will need to be implemented by the second phase of reopening, which then gets carried through the third phase. It is suggested to have a point person that keeps track of the schedule that other fellowship group leaders work with, that is, to reserve spaces and to encourage working in tandem with other fellowship group leaders.

C. Occupancy Limits:

1. Sanctuary must not exceed 25 people.
2. First floor rooms, that is, the space immediately next to the sanctuary as well as the kitchenette area, must not exceed 18 people.
3. Second floor common area must not exceed 12 people.
4. Fellowship hall must not exceed 20 people.

IV. Hygienic and Cleaning Practices:

A. Masks and Face Coverings: Masks must be worn at all times when inside the church building [with the exception of children 2 years old and less]:

1. Each member is responsible for bringing their own masks.
2. The church will have extra masks available for those unable to procure a mask in a timely manner.
3. T-shirts, scarves, and other makeshift coverings will not be considered as proper masks and face coverings.
4. Refusal to wear a mask will lead to one's immediate removal from the premises.

B. Entrance Procedures: Persons entering into the church building will undergo certain screening procedures:

1. Self-Monitoring: Parishioners will closely monitor their own health at home, and if they manifest any alarming symptoms they will stay home and continue monitoring their health.
2. Temperature: Every person entering into the church building must submit to a temperature check. Refusal to do so may result in being turned away.
 - a. Temporal thermometers will be cleaned in between each use with alcohol wipes.
3. Questionnaire: If and when the medical/health team deems it necessary, parishioners may need to answer a set of health-related questions prior to entrance.
4. Hand-Sanitizer: Everyone will use hand sanitizer as they enter into the building, and as they exit the building.

C. Indoor Procedures: While inside the church building, parishioners will observe these basic hygienic practices:

1. Tissues: Everyone should have some tissues on hand and should use them for coughs and sneezes.
2. Washing Hands: Hands should be frequently washed *with soap* in the manner suggested by CDC guidelines.
 - a. Hand sanitizer should also be frequently used throughout.
 - b. Personal hand sanitizer bottles are to be encouraged.
3. Discourage Surface Touching: To the extent that they can, people should avoid touching surfaces and other objects.
 - a. Parishioners should avoid using/holding/touching items which aren't easy to clean, sanitize, or disinfect, and they should keep such things out of the reach of children.
4. Observing Signage: Signs will be placed throughout the church, reminding parishioners to observe the above practices.

D. Church Cleaning: In the beginning, cleaning professionals will be hired for deep cleaning prior to reopening, and then a dedicated church cleaning crew will ensure ongoing cleanliness.

1. Church cleaning crew will vacuum floors, and wipe down chairs and equipment at the end of each service.
 - a. Easy-to-clean chairs will be used, such as metal or plastic chairs.
2. Ensure that ventilation systems are in proper working conditions, increasing the circulation of outdoor air. As much as possible, keep windows and doors open.
 - a. An able-bodied sexton will be appointed and assume responsibility for monitoring the ventilation system and for checking the air quality often. [Note: Sextons are not the same as church custodians.]
 - b. Each room available will have additional air purifiers.⁴

V. Social Distancing Measures:

A. Size of Group Gatherings: The size of group gatherings will be in compliance with state and CDC directives, *even if fellowship activities are held off site.*

⁴ We prefer erring on the side of being overly cautious, of being over-prepared rather than underprepared, of being too safe rather than being potentially unsafe. As church leaders, we are not content with doing the bare minimum, but rather we want to go above and beyond what is required to make sure our facilities are indeed safe, and to make sure parishioners can have some peace of mind.

1. For Sunday services, the church will institute a graduated process of capping attendance, but should not exceed the stipulated number of people per room. Beginning with a certain level of occupancy, it will subsequently be raised by percentage as the state allows.⁵

B. Order of Return: This section details the order of return for various fellowship groups:

1. Youth and young adults will return in the first phase of reopening, and parents will have the option to as well.
2. Infants and young children [i.e. children under the age of 11] will *not* return in the first phase of reopening.
 - a. Depending on the circumstances, they will return either in the second or third phase.
3. Medium risk individuals will return in the second phase of reopening.
3. High risk individuals [i.e. senior citizens and those with underlying medical conditions] will return in the last stages of reopening.

C. Spaced Seating: All seating will be spaced at least six feet apart with the exception of members of the same household [e.g. spouses, siblings, etc.].

D. Bodily Contact: There should be no physical contact between non-family members, such as hugging, holding hands, high-fiving, etc.

E. Worship Set-Up: The worship equipment will be set up in such a way that allows for at least six-foot distancing. The number of worship leaders who are allowed to lead at any one given time will be determined by six-foot distancing. In addition:

1. Choirs and other vocal ensembles will be suspended until further notice.
2. Hymnals and bibles will be temporarily removed and suspended for use. All lyrics will be projected, and every parishioner will bring their own bibles.
3. Tithes and offerings will be received in either one of three ways: stationary collection box, mail, or electronic payment. Collection trays will not be passed around.

F. Sacraments: Communion will be received and distributed in pre-packaged labels. Baptism will be held at the local beach in warm weather. In cold weather,

⁵ Leaders will need to decide what the exact numbers are as we move forward and as we adjust to whatever the situation may be at the time.

baptism will either be postponed, or, if absolutely necessary, conducted in the baptismal pool but with new water for each candidate.

G. Food: The church kitchen will remain closed during this time.

1. In the first stage of reopening, no food will be served.
2. Afterwards, food offered at any event - including events hosted by individual fellowship groups - must come in pre-packaged bags or boxes.

H. Social Distancing Markers: To maintain a distance of six feet, markers will be set in hallways and other open areas.

VI. Monitoring and Preparing:

A. Staff and Other Coworkers must stay at home if they begin to exhibit covid-like symptoms.

1. They should notify other staff and coworkers, who will then fill in for their responsibilities.
2. Sick staff or coworkers will not be able to return to church until they have met the CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation.⁶

B. Emergency Quarantine Space: In the event someone begins to feel sick during communal events, or during hours of operation, they will retreat into the pastor's office, and from there receive further instructions from our medical team.

1. They will either be transported back home or to a nearby health facility.

C. Positive Cases: If a parishioner is diagnosed with COVID-19, and that person was in the church recently, BOT [and other members of the medical team] will notify local health officials. In addition, the BOT will communicate with staff and other members about potential exposure while maintaining confidentiality.

1. Anyone who's been exposed to a positive case must stay at home and self-monitor for symptoms for at least 14 days.
2. If symptoms develop, CDC guidelines must be followed, by calling the COVID hotline [203-688-1700 or 1-833-275-9644] and by setting up an appointment for testing.

D. Cleaning Infected Spaces: Infected areas will be immediately closed off and rendered non-operational until they've been cleaned and sanitized.

1. Cleaning crew must wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting.

⁶ See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>.

2. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, then the cleaning crew must wait as long as possible.

VII. Maintaining Healthy Operations:

A. Health Worker Presence: Whenever the facilities are in use for worship services and fellowship activities, it is strongly recommended that a professional health or medical worker be present.

1. Designated health and medical professionals [e.g. Kitty (RN) and Emily (RN)] will be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns, and parishioners will have their contact information.

B. Emergency Shutdown: In the event a person is diagnosed with COVID-19, he/she should notify a church leader, and if that person was known to be in the church building, then the facilities will immediately be closed and shut down. The BOT/BOD will hire professional cleaners for terminal cleaning in this case, and then decide when the church can reopen.

C. Transparency: The church and its leadership will maintain a practice of transparency. They will communicate clearly with staff, coworkers, and parishioners about current steps being taken to protect their health and well-being.