

# FIRST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Of Thunder Bay

## COVID-19 POLICY

At First Christian Reformed Church of Thunder Bay (First CRC) we commit to maintaining a safe environment for all. In order to maintain a safe church environment, it is required that all those entering the building to join us for worship, events, meetings, etc. follow the protocols outlined in this policy at all times. It is essential that we all join together and do our part to ensure we can continue worshipping and meeting together in the future.

Every person entering the church building is required to ensure they do not have any COVID-19 symptoms **before** entering the building. If any person believes they may have a COVID-19 symptom they are asked to stay home and seek further instruction from the COVID testing phone line before joining us in church. **All persons entering the building are required to wear a mask or face covering as per the Medical Officer of Health's order.** This is not optional unless the person has a medical exemption. It is expected that people will be respectful of the requirement to wear a mask as well as people that have legitimate medical exemptions. Not wearing a mask simply because a person does not want to is not a legitimate medical exemption and not only puts the church at risk for fines or closures from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU), but it also puts those with medical issues at a much higher health risk. All persons are encouraged to bring their own mask, however masks will be available for those who need them.

As per TBDHU requirements, worship services will be limited to 30% of the building capacity. This will be monitored by the ushers to ensure the service does not exceed the allowable number of people at one time. Posters from the TBDHU stating the requirement for face masks or coverings will be posted at the main entrances.

As people enter the church building for worship services the greeter at the door will require they have their mask on (unless medically exempt), they use the hand sanitizer, and they sign in. All persons are required to maintain six feet physical distance between those not in their household or social bubble (this applies at all times while in the building and on church property). As people make their way to the sanctuary (note that the fellowship hall is closed) they will be ushered to a seat that ensures six foot physical distancing from others. Every second pew will be closed off to provide the

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proper distancing. It is expected that the congregation and visitors respect this arrangement and only sit where instructed by the usher.

**Masks are required to be worn at all times during the service, including during singing.** We encourage people to sing softly or simply hum along.

Washrooms will be limited to one person at a time as best as possible. All persons using a washroom that have seen someone go into the washroom are required to wait for them to come out before entering themselves. If anyone enters a washroom not knowing that someone else is already there they are required to maintain six foot physical distancing as best as possible. Hand washing and/or sanitizing is essential before exiting the washroom.

When the worship service is over direction will be provided for exiting one row at a time, starting at the back. All persons are required to remain in their pew until the usher has directed them to leave, at which point they are to exit the building without lingering. Six foot physical distancing is to be maintained while leaving the sanctuary. The offering will be collected at the door as people leave the sanctuary. Attendees are encouraged to have their offerings ready ahead of time to avoid any congestion at the exit. There will be no refreshments after the services. Attendees are required to maintain six foot physical distancing even after exiting the building as per TBDHU requirements.

As part of First CRC's policy to reduce the risk of potential COVID exposure the following will be closed during worship services until further notice:

- Fellowship hall
- Library
- Sunday School
- Nursery

First CRC understands that these are difficult times and that sacrifices are being asked of all our members, staff, and visitors. We are thankful that we are able to worship our God in person once again, but we also understand that a COVID-19 outbreak in our church would be devastating. For the safety of all those attending our services, meetings, events, etc. this policy will be in effect until further notice.