

June 17, 2020

(Revised on July 15, 2020)

Worship Service Guidelines at Calvary Baptist Church

Dear Calvary Baptist Family,

We have been praying for some time now about gathering together again as a local church. By the grace of God, we plan on meeting this Sunday, June 21, to worship our exalted King. This is a day I've been looking forward to ever since I began my ministry at CBC last month! No doubt our Sunday mornings will look quite different for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, we get to pursue God's glory in Christ and him crucified as a worshiping community; this is our highest purpose in life and we get to enjoy it together. It doesn't get any better than this for God's people!

Our Elders have prepared this document to communicate our expectations in order to ensure we all worship safely together. We will be taking many precautions as part of our commitment to your health. Please read the following carefully and feel free to reach out to us with any questions you may have:

THE PLAN FOR THIS SUNDAY (AND GOING FORWARD):

Before leaving your home to come to church you're encouraged to assess yourself (and those in your household) for any symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat). If you have any symptoms, have traveled outside the country in the past 14 days, or have had any close contact with a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days, we ask that you please remain home. You're encouraged to complete an online self-assessment questionnaire (<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>) if you think you may need to self-isolate at home.

Our service will begin at exactly 10am. It will also be broadcast through Facebook Live just as we have been doing every Sunday morning since March. If you plan to join us, we encourage you to arrive between 9:45-9:50am. Expect a short lineup at the entrance of the building. Please maintain appropriate distancing (6 feet/2 meters) as you wait to come in. If you have any mobility issues or would prefer to be dropped off at the entrance, we don't want you to wait in line. Please let us know in advance and someone will assist you in and out of the building.

Upon entering the building, our ushers will welcome you by offering you hand sanitizer and reminding you of our guidelines. There will be signs posted throughout the building. We will also have arrows taped to the carpet to help with the flow and direction of traffic. Effective July 19, masks/face coverings will be required throughout the duration of the service in compliance with the instructions we have been given from *Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH)*. While best efforts will be made to ensure we are all wearing masks/face coverings, there are a few exemptions granted by HPPH on a case by case basis (please consult the *HPPH News Release (dated July 13)* you received by email.

We will make sure to have extra masks available in the foyer of our building.

As part of complying with the Province of Ontario's 30% building capacity protocol, the main sanctuary will be limited to 45 worshipers. We also have space for an additional 40-45 people in our gymnasium downstairs (to accommodate overflow, if necessary). The gymnasium will be equipped to broadcast the Facebook Live feed of our service. Chairs will be set up following proper physical distancing guidelines.

You will notice several pews roped off in the sanctuary of our building. This is to ensure social distancing is being followed throughout the service. We strongly urge no more than two couples to sit per open pew (on each end, maintaining at least 6 feet/2 meters between them). Each family of three and more will have their own pew and be seated together.

One significant difference compared to worship gatherings in the past will concern the practice of congregational singing. *HPPH* discourages churches from singing

during their gatherings since those infected can spread the virus over greater distances through singing and shouting (I'm no medical expert; this is simply what research appears to be showing). We want to follow their advice until further notice. Starting this Sunday and for the foreseeable future, we will only have instrumental music on the piano (and/or guitar), accompanied on occasion by a worship leader/soloist. We want you to express your heart-agreement with the song in other ways (e.g. thinking about the words; humming; softly speaking the words; or offering an "amen").

Another element of our worship service that will look slightly different will be our time of 'Praise and Prayer'. We are certainly not giving up on the practice of sharing requests and praying for one another during our gathering. However, we would also like to minimize interaction at this time to prevent the spread of COVID-19. So while there won't be a formal time of sharing and praying individually for at least a couple weeks, I will make sure to include your praises and needs in my pastoral prayer this Sunday (and going forward) if you feel inclined to send them to me in advance by email or via text message (905-467-7525).

Following the conclusion of our worship service, our ushers will dismiss you by section (back to front) and lead you outside the building. There will be no 'coffee fellowship' before or after the service (this may change in weeks to come). You are encouraged to greet one another and have conversations preferably outside the church building while physical distancing protocols are maintained.

OTHER IMPORTANT DETAILS:

- Both the coat rack and the church library will be closed until further notice.
- We will not be having "children's church" on Sunday mornings until further notice. We still encourage you to bring your children to church. Our hope is to provide colouring sheets and sermon notes for your children. You are responsible for bringing crayons. In addition, we will have two "Family Zones" in the foyer during the service (with tables and chairs) if you're looking for more space. As for the nursery downstairs, it will be available for the use of one family ('first come, first served' policy).

- We encourage you to send in your offerings via e transfer. We will not collect an offering during the service. There will be an offering box available on your way out of the building in the foyer. A second offering box can be made available (if necessary) in the back of the gymnasium.
- The wheelchair accessible bathroom in the foyer will be **the only available bathroom** for those worshipping in the sanctuary. If we have more people gathered in the gymnasium, they will have access to the bathrooms downstairs.
- Men, please make sure to grab your chocolate bar for Father's Day on your way out. They will be placed on a table below the 'Community Events' bulletin board.

A WORD FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT ATTEND:

We understand some of you may be hesitant or undecided about gathering again as a church family. If, for whatever reason, you can't join us at this time (e.g. you are at higher risk, do not want to compromise the health of others or concerned about reopening in general), we respect your decision. Know that we love you and consider you an integral part in the life of Calvary Baptist Church! We want to continue serving you in every way possible. We encourage you to continue worshipping from home by watching our Facebook live stream or the TV rebroadcast.

We appreciate your time reading through this document. We are counting on your patience and grace as we go about reopening our church building. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact myself or any one of our Elders.

Yours in Christ,
Sam Katchikian