



Public Health Guidelines for First Free Ministry Teams

Last updated June 15, 2021

Approved by the elders on 6/15/21

In-Person Worship Service

- **The gathering of believers at First Free on Sunday mornings is open to all!** No capacity limits while Chicago remains in Phase 5 of Re-Opening. You can choose to sit in one of these three areas:
 - *Sanctuary main floor*: no registration required, sit wherever you would like to, distancing encouraged
 - *Sanctuary balcony*: social-distanced seating with registration
 - *Family table room* (120s classroom in the Family Life Center): video feed will be streamed here with tables set up for families as well as some toys for young children to use. This space is open to anyone in the church
- **Families with children of all ages are invited to attend the worship service**, and we will provide these resources to help children stay engaged during the sermon:
 - *Activity bags*: all children from nursery to 5th grade will have an activity bag, labeled with their name, waiting for them to use. We will have some visitor bags ready, too. These are reusable from week to week, so you can pick them up and drop them off in the activity bag bins outside the Sanctuary doors.
 - They will be set up with an initial set of supplies, and then parents are responsible to manage them. We will provide a self-serve restock station every few months. You are welcome to add quiet activities from home to your child(ren)'s activity bag.
 - *Nursery*: the nursery will be open and available to anyone who needs to use it. It will not be staffed; there is no audio or video feed here. Parents are expected to supervise their children, and this space is designed for young children, ages 0-4.
 - *Family table room*: See above.
- **While in the building, please continue to wear a face mask**, even if you are vaccinated or comfortable without one. We are doing this in solidarity with those who cannot be vaccinated or who are medically vulnerable, to make First Free's church campus a place that is welcoming to all.
 - Musicians who are vaccinated can remove their mask while they are leading the congregation in worship. Anyone giving an announcement who is vaccinated can remove their mask while speaking.
 - The person preaching the Word can do so without a mask, regardless of vaccination status.

See page 2-4 for FAQ!



FAQ for Ministry on the First Free campus

The elders encourage all ministry teams to align their activities with the mission and vision of the church and to follow these guidelines for any of your gatherings. Above all, remember that as a community of believers, we are committed to living gospel-centered lives, showing grace to one another, caring for the vulnerable, encouraging each other in the Word, sharing our practical needs, and serving our neighbors together with the love and light of Christ. In support of our mission, we want our church campus to be a safe and welcoming place for all to grow as disciples of Jesus together.

Do I still have to wear a face mask?

- In most cases, yes.
 - *For any all-church gatherings*, where everyone is welcome, all individuals are asked to continue wearing face coverings regardless of vaccination status if they are over the age of 2 and do not have a medical exemption.
 - If there is a medical exemption, disclose and discuss this with the leaders of the gathering before it begins so appropriate measures can be taken to ensure everyone's safety.
 - *For small groups or restricted gatherings*, such as ministry team meetings, the continued wearing of face coverings is at the discretion of the gathering leader based on the participants' needs and vaccination status. If everyone is vaccinated, face masks are not required.
- Please honor one another and conform to the most cautious among you.
- Please wear a face mask when entering and leaving the building, and while using the restrooms, in case you come across someone who wasn't part of your gathering group, but is using the building at the same time.

Do I have to maintain social distancing?

- In most cases no, but please avoid crowding as you move about the building.
 - The physical distancing of 6 feet between household groups will *only* apply to the balcony seating in the Sanctuary for Sunday morning worship services.
- Parents, please keep your children close to you at all times.
 - Children nursery - 5th grade must be accompanied by at least one parent or designated caregiver at all times, even when going to the restroom.
 - If children are to be supervised by a designated caregiver instead of a parent, this needs to be disclosed before the gathering begins
- If you are organizing a gathering, please consider the logistics for ingress and egress, in order to communicate expectations clearly ahead of time and/or put up clear signs so that all attendees know what to do.

Do any rooms on the church campus have capacity limits?

- The main floor of the Sanctuary can be filled to 100% capacity.
- The balcony of the Sanctuary will be filled as much as possible while maintaining 6-ft spacing between household groups who have registered to sit there.



- For other rooms in the church, they can be filled to 100% capacity (set by building use codes and overseen by the facilities team).
- There may be simultaneous gatherings in the building. Each group should try to remain separate as much as possible, in order to give each group freedom to follow different masking guidelines, if the participants of one group are all vaccinated and therefore able to meet without face masks.

Can I bring a drink or snack to church?

- In most cases, yes.
 - You can bring a drink with a lid into the Sanctuary. Since we will all still be wearing face masks, please keep your sips brief.
 - It is recommended that you eat right before or right after the church service in order to limit any food messes in the Sanctuary. However, small children or individuals with hypoglycemia may need to eat more frequently and are allowed to do so. Please keep your face mask on between bites.
- Once we have volunteers who can coordinate a welcome beverage table, we will resume having one.
- Once we have volunteers who can coordinate a Connections Cafe table for refreshments after the service, we will resume having one.
 - During the summer and early fall, this would be set up on the sidewalk or church parking lot to eat and fellowship in the fresh air.
- Meals, such as luncheons or potlucks, should be held in an outdoor space during the summer months. We will revisit this as we approach the fall.

What do we need to do to clean or sanitize supplies?

- Whenever possible, ask households to bring their own supplies or provide single-use or disposable supplies to limit the amount of disinfecting the custodial staff needs to do.
- For reusable supplies, they will need to be cleaned and disinfected if they will be used again in less than 7 days. However, if 7 days or more will pass between using the supplies, they will not need special disinfecting.

What do we need to do to clean the space after using it?

- Clean up after yourselves: discard trash and recycling, wipe up any spills, remove any dirt, debris or residue you see after use the space, sweep or vacuum the floors, and return the furniture to how you found it.
- Let a space be empty and at rest for 4 hours before the custodial staff comes in to sanitize it.
 - The Family Life Center HVAC system replaces 25% of the air per hour, so it takes about 4 hours to completely replace all the air in the room before the custodial staff sanitize it and another group uses it.
- The custodial staff will disinfect the space according to the CDC guidelines, which includes using a disinfectant (bleach) on all surfaces, tables, chairs, door knobs, railings, entrance doors, bathrooms, and mopping the floors.

- Even when a group cleans thoroughly after themselves, which is very helpful, the custodial staff still needs to disinfect the space before it can be used by another group.
- No kids must be in the building while disinfecting is going on due to the fact that these chemicals are strong and can cause harm to little ones.
- If 7 days or more will pass between usage of the space by two different groups, it will not need special disinfecting, just regular cleaning.

What do we do if someone feels sick?

If an individual does not feel well, they and their household should stay home from any gathering.

- If an individual starts to feel unwell during a gathering, they should notify a volunteer before they and their household exit the building.
- If an individual develops symptoms of coronavirus or tests positive for COVID-19 within two weeks of having attended a gathering, they should notify the church office at 773-561-4175 or info@firstfree.com.

How do I reserve space?

Outdoor gatherings are recommended over indoor gatherings whenever possible. If an indoor gathering is necessary, it is recommended that the gathering last no more than 1 ½ hours; if it needs to last longer than that, you may request an exception.

- To reserve space for your ministry, please contact Adolfo (aramirez@firstfree.com or by phone).
- To add your ministry event to the church calendar and request an announcement (at a Sunday service, on the website, and/or in a church-wide email), please contact Aurora (atallacksen@firstfree.com).