

In light of recent COVID Directives and Developments

A Message from the Leadership Team

December 18, 2020

Dear FMC Congregation:

The approach that Franconia Mennonite Church Leadership Team has taken for church gatherings during the COVID pandemic might be called the “moderate middle.” We have placed a high value on meeting in-person while taking concrete steps to reduce risk of transmission at gatherings. To date, we are not aware of any virus transmission occurring at church-sponsored events.

The Leadership Team believes that recent directives and developments should be taken seriously. To do so is a positive witness to our neighbors about seeking the common good during a public health crisis. At the same time, we believe that gatherings for worship, and for educational and youth activities are essential for congregational health and ministry.

Therefore, although we hold a variety of opinions as individuals, we as a Leadership Team agree on the following temporary guidelines for FMC through Christmas and the first Sunday of January 2021:

1. **Precautions:** Everyone inside the church building, age two and over,* is required to wear a face-covering over nose and mouth at all times except for when they are up-front leading (speaking or singing). This applies for BFGs, Sunday School classes and worship services. Physical distancing, even while wearing masks, is strongly recommended.
2. **Non-worship Gatherings:** We recognize that BFGs, Sunday School classes, youth activities and Celebrate Recovery do not qualify as actual worship services. We believe these gatherings are essential settings for mutual support and spiritual health. Therefore, when the respective leaders are willing, we will allow such gatherings to carry on, with diligent precautions in place.
3. **Christian Witness:** In this moment, it is especially important that each member considers the interests of others as well as our own. We urge members to be slow to anger and generous with mercy toward one another. Additionally, we encourage one another to be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give the reason for the hope that we have, and for why Franconia Church continues to gather carefully in-person for high-priority activities.

We understand that this is a difficult time for many of us and for our neighbors. We also believe that our Christian witness is particularly important and supposed to be life-giving to others. When the darkness is deeper, the light of Christ shines more brightly. We give thanks for you every day.

The Leadership Team: Larry Diener, Helen Eastburn, Bronwen Leister, Josh Meyer, Kyle Rodgers, Mark Wenger

*We recognize that it can be a real struggle for parents to keep masks on the younger children.
Thanks for trying your best.