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Eastgate's Plan to Worship God Together

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Dear Eastgate,

It is only a matter of weeks, God willing, before we will once again be able to gather as a whole body! We expect that that this can happen when the Queensland restrictions move to Stage 3. We are longing to be together with you once more!

As we plan for gathering in person again, we have a few things that we are aiming for:

1. Worship that is focused on and exalts God, following His scriptural commands,
2. A gathering that shows love to one another in a genuine and tangible way, and,
3. A gathering that meets and exceeds the government requirements.

To that end the Elders have put together the following plan so that we can gather in the name of Christ and glorify the name of the Lord. These plans are based on the current information we have about what restrictions will be in place at that time, our understanding of best practice, and, our desire to serve the Lord together. They are therefore subject to change based on the information that comes available. Although some things may seem over the top, every change is aimed at reducing the risk of transmitting the novel coronavirus.

When can we come to the church gathering?

We hope to start meeting as a whole body again as soon as possible. Based on the current advice that date will be 12 July 2020.

You will not be able to come to church if you are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, or infected, or in contact with someone who is infected, or recently returned from overseas. If none of these things apply to you but you are in a high risk group, such as those who are older and those with respiratory issues, we encourage you to stay away from the physical gathering for your own safety.

For those who are prevented from joining us due to the above reasons, we will continue to offer live streaming of our services for as long as there is higher risk or quarantined regular attenders.

What will be different before services?

When you arrive on Sunday morning you'll need to meet outside the building, maintaining social distancing of 1.5m between household groups. It's still a good idea to turn up a little earlier because there will be a "sign in" process that we need to follow. If you can, please wash your hands before coming into the buildings.

Sign in - When it's your household's turn to enter the building, please use the hand sanitizer as you come in (if you haven't just washed your hands). Someone will be there to note down your arrival time and contact details, so that in the sad event that someone in our midst contracts the disease, we can notify all who were present that day. If you're a regular, we will have your details ready to go, and you will just have to sign against your name. Please bring your own pen.

Serving – We will have more jobs to do on any given Sunday, and we hope to use our regular rostered service teams, albeit with a few extra jobs like cleaning high contact areas before and after the service.

How many people can come?

As the current advice stands, we can have gatherings up to 100 people in Stage 3, with a minimum of 4m² per person. Due to the size of our meeting spaces we will have limited numbers in each room. We plan to have an overflow room, so that once we reach the limit in the Concert Hall, we will overflow to one of the other rooms with a live video & audio feed of the service. There will be signage indicating how many people can fit, and people keeping track of the numbers.

The limits for each room at 4m² per person are:

Concert Hall - 51 people Play House - 33 people Austral Room - 25 people

If you are a regular at Eastgate, and it looks like we will reach the limit of people in the Concert Hall, we would ask that you to consider moving to the overflow room so that we can show honour and generosity to any guests we may host on a Sunday morning by giving them the better seats.

What will be different during services?

Our service will generally follow the same form and style as always, however there will be differences in how we interact as the body. Please sit with your household groups, at least 1.5 apart from other groups.

Communion – We plan to practice communion, however due the high-risk nature of communal sharing, we will have extra steps involved than you may not be used to. When it is time to receive the elements, please exit your rows to the outside of the building and circle around to the back to make use of the hand sanitizer before coming forward down the aisle to participate. Once you have received the elements, please walk along the front of the chairs and return to your seat via the outside of your row. We will be offering individually wrapped communion portions for those who are not yet ready to share the communal loaf. At all times, maintain 1.5m from other household groups.

Communion will be served in both the Concert Hall and the overflow room.

Offerings – Cash offerings may still be given by depositing them in the box on the back table. The counter will use gloves when handling the box or money.

Children – We will not be providing communal toys in the service for the time being. Please feel free to bring quiet toys or activities at your own discretion. The children's ministries such as creche and SonRise Kids will be started as soon as possible, and we will provide more information about them when those plans are in place.

Ventilation – We will be having some ventilation in our meeting spaces through doors and windows as needed. We're coming onto those colder months, so it may get chilly at church! Please dress warmly.

What will be different after services?

Mingling – It may be hard, but we ask that you don't mingle inside the buildings or loiter near doorways. When the service is complete, please move outside promptly, then feel free to catch up with people in the courtyard while social distancing. You could also take the opportunity to meet them at another location such as a home or restaurant for that longer meeting.

Lunch / Morning Tea – We will not be sharing our regular lunches or morning teas for the foreseeable future.

Clean Up – As mentioned before, there will be some additional cleaning required when we pack-up like wiping down equipment, door handles and other contact points.

Conclusion

This letter is the outline of our plan. For the formal document with more detail, please take a look at the *COVID-19 Later Stages Action Plan for Eastgate Bible Church* which will be available on our website.

We're very keen to come together once more, as the Church is designed to do, but we don't want to be the unnecessary cause of any illness or transmission. We hope that you can meet with us soon so that we can physically embody the spiritual body that we are in Christ.