

GBC Reopening Plan

We are seeking to provide opportunities to gather onsite for as many people as possible without compromising safety. Our reopening plan has been guided by our experiences of reopening earlier this year, by the survey we conducted on the weekend of September 26, and a few key principles.

We assume, for instance, that reengagement will be gradual (as it was earlier this year) especially as we learn what it means to live with COVID in the community.

The survey provided us with three key pieces of information. First, that we have a very high rate of vaccination (98% of respondents indicated they were, or were going to be, fully vaccinated). Second, that willingness to return decreased with age but a vast majority (close to 85%) were willing to return when we reach 80% community vaccination. Third, that parents were generally willing to have their children participate, but that parental comfort would increase with vaccinations and with the return to face-to-face education. We have taken these into account in our plan.

The principles we have used include a commitment to conform to Public Health Orders and to provide as many opportunities for people to engage in onsite services as possible (without compromising the first).

We will initially be constrained by the 4m² limitation and all attendees will be required to comply to our COVID-Safe Plan including:

- registering for onsite events,
- not attending if feeling unwell,
- signing in and out of onsite events,
- wearing masks inside,
- maintaining social distancing, and
- providing proof of vaccination.

Those who are eligible but unvaccinated are encouraged to reach out if they require additional support. We are prepared to do all we can to help people remain connected and cared for up to December 1 when they are able to participate in community activities should they choose to.

This decision has been made in the interest of the safety of those who are unvaccinated as per the Public Health Orders and will be in place until December 1.

Proof of vaccination will also be required for all face-to-face volunteers. This will be in place beyond December 1 and will be reassessed as community health advice changes.

The initial plan is to recommence two onsite services: 9:30am and 6:00pm and to begin a third service on Fridays at 10:00am. This allows us to provide an onsite for as many people as possible while still maintaining the livestream of our 9:30am service which, we anticipate, will continue to be the main point of connection for the majority of our community of faith in the short- to medium-term future. Livestreaming has not only been well-received, but is more sustainable from a staff and volunteer team perspective.

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The Friday morning service is an interim service focused on those who do not have young families and/or no longer work full-time (or at least not on Fridays). The service will be essentially the same as Sunday (e.g., same sermon). The hope is that this will provide a point of connection for a significant demographic in our community of faith, create space for families when we return to onsite services on Sunday mornings, and decrease the possibility of community transmission from children who are not yet eligible for vaccinations.

Key Dates

Sunday, October 17 – 6:00 pm services recommence onsite (+ livestream).

Friday, October 22 – 10:00 am service begins.

Sunday, October 31 – 9:30 am services recommence onsite (+ livestream).

*Until December 1 masks will be required while indoors, congregational singing will be prohibited, and we will be constrained by 4m² attendance limitations.

Summary of Services Offered

Sunday October 17	9:30am livestream only	6:00pm onsite + livestream
Friday October 22	10:00am onsite only	
Sunday October 24	9:30am livestream only	6:00pm onsite + livestream
Friday October 29	10:00am onsite only	
Sunday October 31	9:30am onsite + livestream	6:00pm onsite + livestream

From December 1 it is assumed that we will move to 2m², effectively doubling our capacity. We will monitor overall numbers and re-evaluate as necessary, but we are planning to keep these three services (Friday at 10:00am, Sunday at 9:30am and 6:00pm – alongside the livestreaming) until Christmas.

The other change at December 1 is that we will only require masks to sing. This is to limit the “riskiest” activity that we engage in as a community of faith. Masks will not be necessary at any other point in the service apart from when we sing.

Other details (e.g., the COVID-Safe plan, registration details) will be released as they are clarified.

If you have questions or comments please send them to office@gymeabaptist.org.au