

There are five values that we use as leaders at Creekside to guide our decision making around how the church should function during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Both the Elders Team and the Pastors Team converse around these decisions, with the Elders making the final call, in broad strokes, on how the church will function.

## **WE WILL MAKE DECISIONS THAT . . .**

1. **Empower us to continue to fulfill our mission of helping people . . . Follow Jesus. Love God. Love People.** This is Jesus' calling on us as a church and we must obey Him. No matter our circumstances, we will do all we can to continue to fulfill this call on our lives, both corporately and individually.
2. **Align with our need to submit to those in governing authority over us.** (Romans 13:1-2) The government's position is one that has been ordained by God. They have a divine responsibility to direct and protect us. We will heartily submit to their leadership over us, as long as it does not violate our ability to fulfill our other four guidelines.
3. **Enable us to love and care for our Creekside family.** (1 Peter 5:2) Creekside is a faith community bound together by our love for one another. This love is both a joy to experience and a command to be expressed. There is no higher evidence of our relationship with God than our love and care for one another. Love for one another is an essential element in our decision making.
4. **Extend our love for the people of Waterloo Region.** (Mark 12:33) We will act in such a way during this pandemic as to love and serve others by being model citizens, following safe practices, and helping meet the needs of others, as we are able.
5. **Consider in practical ways, those with greater sensitivities to our present global pandemic.** (Romans 14; Philippians 2:4; 1 Corinthians 10:24). We will make programming decisions, that bring into consideration, those most sensitive personally to the emotional, mental, physical and spiritual impact of the pandemic.

## **FAQ'S**

**1. What if the government restrictions conflict with our mandate as a church? Is there ever a time when we would choose to disobey those restrictions?** Yes. But such a decision would only come if the restrictions clearly targeted the church as opposed to other institutions or if the restrictions stopped us from fulfilling our mandate as a church. We believe that our first response is to seek to submit. If that was not possible then we would initiate dialogue with the government seeking to come to a mutual agreement. We live in a democracy where it is both our right and responsibility to speak out in both support and critique of those in governing positions over us.

**2. Why are we not as "open" as other churches are?** Each church is unique in terms of their personality, congregational size, facility size and layout, demographic, technical acumen, context, volunteer needs, staffing, speed with which they can pivot, willingness to follow the restrictions and so on. This uniqueness enables some churches to make changes with little adjustment. For other churches such changes are more challenging. At Creekside, the size of our congregation along with the number of services we need to run because of the layout of

our facility, creates some unique challenges, particularly on Sundays for the main Worship Service. Some of our ministries such as youth, LifeGroups, alpha, bible studies, care groups and so on are functioning on our campuses, following all the safety protocols, in a consequently limited approach.

**3. When will we get back to life at Creekside as it was pre-covid?** There are two responses to this.

First, when we get back it is likely that everything will not be as it was pre-covid. We believe it will be better. Doing church during this pandemic has taught us a number of things such as how we have been running our Online Campus, the use of paper Sunday Updates, the place of technology in a number of ministry areas (such as prayer, LifeGroup, Ministry Team Meetings, communicating with the congregation, Kids Ministry Parties etc.). We believe that we have learned some things that will only prove to enhance our ability to Follow Jesus. Love God. Love People. That is exciting!

Second, we have worked on a plan to do church during the various levels of the Zones in Ontario, that will enable us to move more quickly when the Zones change and allow us to be more aggressive in our approach to ministry without compromising our need to stay safe and strong.

**4. What are some key ways we can respond as individuals to this situation?** This pandemic is new all of us all over the planet. We are learning a lot. In the process we have been making decisions we might make differently were we to do things over again. We need a lot of grace toward ourselves and toward others. We feel for governments around the world as they try to balance the tension between economic needs and healthy needs. Churches too are trying to discern the best way to live out their mission all the while hearing various voices with varying degrees of intensity from those who are a part of their church family.

We would urge you to dive into the four practices we have been suggesting can be key to finding balance and spiritual growth during this time. They include

- Engaging in our Sunday Service
- Participating in a LifeGroup
- Helping your children participate in programs for them
- Praying for others.

Also, should you find yourself struggling during this time, whether mentally, spiritually, financially, relationally and so on please know that we are here to help. Confidentiality is something we highly value. You matter to us and we have great resources to help you move to a healthier posture in all of those and other areas.