

Fall 2020 Task Force Report

Reopening Recommendations and Plans

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed all of our lives in many ways. We did not expect to move to online courses for the second half of the spring semester, but God helped us make it work in surprisingly effective ways so that we were able to help 55 graduates finish their programs this year. Nonetheless, our educational model is intensely relational. We view education as a subset of discipleship, and discipleship is difficult to do online. Therefore, we are prayerfully planning on resuming face-to-face instruction in the fall semester.

The following report provides a plan for our events that surround the beginning of the year, the ongoing community in our school, and our classroom procedures. In all of these plans, we will abide by the requirements of the state of Minnesota and recommendations from the CDC. We are prepared to move from in-person to online meetings if necessary (and vice versa); however, our intentionally small student body, our non-traditional campus setting, and our cohort model all set us up well to resume classes in person without most of the challenges that large universities with thousands of students and large campus events will face.

In light of the recent unrest in Minneapolis, we have also reviewed our security procedures in all of our campus buildings and in our student housing. We had no property damaged or threatened and do not anticipate this in the coming months. We have had detailed security measures in place for some time now. We will increase vigilance in following those measures that limit access to any of our buildings to students, staff, and confirmed visitors. In light of our COVID-19 procedures, we will likely have fewer visitors than normal and do not anticipate security challenges with unexpected visitors. We will remain on high alert during the coming semester to ensure that our students and facilities remain secure and frequently remind our students of how best to remain safe (see security reminders below).

Our general procedure with both students and staff will be to ask any member of our community who shows symptoms or has reason to suspect they've been exposed to COVID-19 during the semester to be tested. If a test is not available, anyone showing symptoms must self-quarantine for 10 days. If the test is positive, we will trace interactions with other staff or students, test any who may have been infected, and continue this process for any positive tests. If the test is negative, any person displaying symptoms should still stay home and isolated until the symptoms have passed. Under normal circumstances, anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 should not return to campus until he or she has received a negative test.

We plan to move forward with our opening events on a modified schedule. Rather than gather together in a single orientation for all new students, each program will have a separate orientation time (traditional college, M.Div., and non-traditional programs). This will allow us to have in-person gatherings while abiding by CDC and state of

Minnesota guidelines. We will also have to modify retreats but still plan to hold new student and house leader retreats as outlined below.

Our focus for the fall semester will center on community within cohorts and houses; however, all-school events such as the welcome picnic, the Fall and Christmas parties, and weekly all-school lunches are canceled for the fall semester and likely for the spring. Ongoing discipleship within mentoring relationships and small gatherings should be able to continue as planned; we should also be able to meet for weekly chapel with appropriate distancing.

We are making many adjustments to minimize large group gatherings and congested areas of the building. We will follow the church's procedures for facilities use, including separate entrances and exits. We also plan to rearrange classroom set ups to allow for social distancing, provide procedures for disinfecting classrooms before and after use, keep cohorts in a single classroom, and stagger the schedule to minimize foot traffic. We will be proactive in testing and tracing any cases of COVID-19 in our community and will work to contain them quickly should any arise.

In the classroom, we will ensure appropriate social distancing practices and maximize space between the professor and students to prevent respiratory droplets from reaching the students. All professors will be prepared to instruct via Zoom when necessary; students and professors will use an abundance of caution when determining whether to stay home, and professors will teach through Zoom to accommodate confirmed COVID-19 cases or related long-term absences if needed. The use of Zoom or other technologies for isolated absences will be at the professor's discretion.

While we are planning as well as we can, we are prepared to flex in different directions. If it is necessary to spend a portion of the semester online, we learned how to execute that well during the previous spring semester. Professors and students are familiar with the Zoom platform and can move back to that format quickly if necessary.

At this point, the task force is not inclined to recommend ending the semester early. However, if the administrative leadership determines the best course would be to finish in-person instruction by Thanksgiving, we recommend that the final two weeks of instruction be done remotely via Zoom, followed by a week of remote finals.

Finally, we submit these plans not in confident assurance that we have all of the answers, but rather in an attempt to prepare to serve our students well in the coming semester. We say together with the apostle James that, if the Lord wills, we will gather together in person the way we are planning in the following document (see James 4:13–17). We trust that even in this pandemic, God is for us and is using these circumstances to conform our students, faculty, and staff to the image of Christ.

FALL REOPENING IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In the pages that follow, we have outlined how different areas of the school's operations will function as we make adjustments in light of the pandemic and the ongoing situation in Minneapolis.

In one sense, this plan requires "all hands on deck." Every staff and faculty member will have to contribute with cheerful flexibility to implement this plan effectively. However, each area will require direct supervision and flexibility to execute well.

The following point people will be responsible to implement aspects of this plan.

1. Jason Abell will be responsible for facilities. In consultation with Scott Brueske and Cody Sandidge, he will make decisions regarding facility use and set up. Garrett Gransee will implement most of this set up. Jason will brief faculty and staff on general facilities issues during our planning days.
2. Cody Sandidge will be responsible for safety and security protocols. Cody will brief faculty and staff on general security issues during our planning days and will provide guidance to students at orientation and throughout the semester.
3. Barb Waldemar will be responsible for orientation plans. Barb will brief faculty and staff on orientation and opening events plans during our planning days.
4. Chris Bruno will be responsible for the seminary "Telling God's Story" retreat and Zach Howard for the new incoming college student retreat schedule.
5. Chris Bruno and Brian Tabb are responsible for classroom and chapel procedures, with assistance from Zach Howard for implementing college programs and Rick Shenk for implementing evening programs. They will communicate our plan for safe classroom management during our planning days and will continue to remind faculty of the procedures throughout the semester. The academic dean will approve any decisions regarding Zoom classroom use and other accommodations.
6. Barbara Winters will be responsible for the library policies. She will brief the faculty and staff during our planning days and the students during orientation.
7. Cody Sandidge and Barb Waldemar will be responsible for student life planning, under the supervision of Chris Bruno. Cody and/or Barb will brief the faculty and staff on our student life plans and procedures during our planning days.
8. Rick Segal and Leah Bruneau will be responsible for internal and external communication about our plans and policies (including mask use). They will communicate our facilities and classroom planning to our constituents and will work to communicate any changes to this plan quickly and clearly.

RECOMMENDED COVID-19 TESTING & RESULTS PROTOCOL

We are asking that all students, faculty, and staff review the procedures for getting a COVID-19 test at one of the [local testing locations](#) before the beginning of the fall semester. While we are not requiring testing before the semester, we will encourage the Bethlehem community to be familiar with testing locations and procedures. If a student or staff member has reason to believe he or she has been exposed to COVID-19 or travels to a COVID-19 “hot spot” (defined as an area where case count, hospitalizations, and deaths are trending upward), that person must either take a COVID-19 test or quarantine for 10 days before returning to campus. If that person is living in Bethlehem school housing or with other students, all of his or her roommates should be tested and follow the protocol above before returning to campus.

Per the State of Minnesota Department of Health, symptoms of COVID-19 can include cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell. Other less common symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. These symptoms may appear 2–14 days after being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19. Not everyone with COVID-19 has all of these symptoms, and some people may not have any symptoms.

Any student or staff member who is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home and isolate themselves and seek to get a test for the virus. In the event that a member of the Bethlehem College & Seminary community tests positive before the semester starts, he or she should isolate according to the CDC’s recommendations. [The CDC recommends](#) that someone with COVID-19 isolates until:

- at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset **and**
- at least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- other symptoms have improved.

If a member of the Bethlehem College & Seminary community tests positive during the semester, that person must follow the protocol described above for isolation. Under normal circumstances, that person should wait until they test negative to return to campus. In addition, groups that have had regular close contact with that person should seek to get a test or follow the quarantine protocol described above. If deemed necessary by the academic dean, a cohort and/or a professor’s courses will move to Zoom delivery for a limited time when there is reason to believe there is a risk of infection.

If a member of the Bethlehem College & Seminary community needs to stay home because of sickness or suspected exposure to COVID-19 at any time, he or she should inform their supervisor and/or professors that they will not be on campus and work with them on a plan for making up any missed work. Without violating any HIPAA laws, when a staff member is informed that another member of the BCS community has tested positive for COVID-19, he or she must inform Chris Bruno, who will then work with the President’s Cabinet to determine additional preventative measures to take.

When professors are unable to attend their scheduled courses, they should follow the normal procedures in the faculty handbook:

If a professor is unable to be present for class due to a planned absence, he or she will arrange for a substitute teacher or schedule a reading day if appropriate. If a professor needs to cancel a class period due to illness or an emergency, he or she will email the students in the class and notify the registrar (p. 17).

Substitute faculty or guest speakers should be approved in advance by the academic dean. Normally, substitute faculty or guest speakers are paid for their teaching, either by the course instructor or in some cases, by the institution. If funds are available, the institution may occasionally pay for substitute faculty or guest speakers, particularly if the speaker brings unique expertise which significantly strengthens the course.

Substitute faculty may also be utilized during absences for illness, family emergencies, cross-cultural teaching trips, or presentations at a professional conference (ETS and SBL, for example). Faculty may seek substitution from among resident faculty on a reciprocal basis. Such substitution will not be compensated. Resident faculty members are encouraged to substitute for one another if their schedule and area of expertise allows. In cases where a course is separately contracted (fall or spring semester overload, January-term or summer school classes), when a resident faculty colleague takes a significant part of the course (as opposed to one or two lectures), compensation will be divided proportionally after setting aside a portion to cover the requirements of the professor of record (p. 29).

In addition, faculty should ask one or two persons (teaching assistants, fellow faculty, or others) who agree to serve as primary substitutes in the event that the faculty member is not able to teach. As part of our general approach of “all hands on deck,” faculty should make every effort to fill in for each other when able.

HANDBOOK ADDENDUM

The following addendum will be included in the student handbook for the 2020–21 school year:

“Bethlehem College & Seminary has an important role in reducing the spread of COVID-19. All students, faculty, and staff should take personal responsibility to follow policies and procedures set by Bethlehem College & Seminary and Bethlehem Baptist Church. Adherence to policies and procedures should have as its aim both *love for neighbor* and *submission to authorities*. Students, faculty, and staff should be flexible, ready to modify actions as necessary and to encourage others to do likewise as guidelines and recommendations adapt over time.”

THIRD FLOOR ENTRANCE, CLASSROOM, STUDENT LOUNGE, AND CHAPEL PROCEDURES

Students and staff will enter the building only through the weekday entrance doors and exit only through the glass doors near the sanctuary. When entering the third floor, students and faculty should make sure they are wearing a mask and sanitize their hands.

In the classroom, we will follow current Minnesota guidelines. Most notably, as of July 25, Governor Walz's executive order requiring face covering throughout the state includes the following guidance for higher educational institutions:

Higher education institutions. Students and staff in higher education institutions must comply with the requirements of this Executive Order, except that students and faculty are permitted to wear face shields as an alternative to face coverings in the following situations:

1. When faculty are teaching a class or giving a lecture, or when students are participating in classroom activities, where it is important for the face to be seen (for example, certain activities in language or communications classes).
2. Where a face covering may pose a hazard due to the nature of the class or activity (for example, in a laboratory component of a class).
3. When staff or faculty are providing direct student support services and a face covering impedes the service being provided.

Per these guidelines and the policies of Bethlehem Baptist Church, we will allow faculty to remove masks when lecturing, provided they are able to maintain 6 feet of distance from students. Students will still be required to wear face coverings in the classroom.

Cohorts will normally stay in the same classroom for the day. Neither students nor faculty should move tables or rearrange the classroom set up for any reason. As much as possible, seek to maintain proper social distancing in the classroom.

While on campus, students should remain on the third floor (with the exception of chapel). They generally should not go up to the fourth floor to address Bethlehem College & Seminary matters and should generally leave the classroom only when necessary. Students should use the bathroom attached to the classroom. If there is not a restroom in the classroom, students should use the one that is closest to their class. At the end of the day, students will sanitize the tables and other surfaces in the classroom before leaving.

Students may use the lounge and mailroom, but capacity is limited to 20 students at a time. We will remove some seats and space the tables 6 feet apart so that students will be able to use the lounge for study, quiet breaks, and recreation within proper guidelines. Students must commit to proper social distancing in the lounge. We will not

move the copier, but we must encourage all faculty and students to go paperless for assignments and grading, to minimize the use of the copier. Also, the copier will only be accessible during non-class times.

During the lunch break, students typically will remain in their classrooms and not congregate in the halls or other common areas.

During chapel on Wednesdays, students will be required to sit with their cohorts, 6 feet apart from others who are not members of their household. Per state of Minnesota guidelines, students and staff will wear masks through the whole service. Immediately after chapel, ushers will dismiss rows one-at-a-time and students and staff will either exit the building or return to their classrooms or offices for the afternoon.

If possible, meetings will take place on Zoom or outside when the weather permits. For indoor meetings for both staff and students, face coverings and proper social distancing are required.

CHAPEL FALL 2020

Unchanging Truths in a Changing World: Meditations on the Apostle's Creed

What shall we say as our city, our nation, and our world face unprecedented challenges amidst a global pandemic, social unrest, and political divisions? "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." The Fall 2020 chapel series stresses our commitment to historic Christian doctrine and God's trustworthy word as the Bethlehem faculty expound the ancient truths expressed in the Apostle's Creed to encourage our community to follow Christ in these uncertain times.

Chapel Procedures

Only the Bethlehem College & Seminary immediate community will be allowed to attend chapel (students, faculty/staff, and church staff). Students will sit with their cohorts, properly distanced in the pews. All students and staff will be required to wear masks. Ushers will dismiss rows one by one at the end of chapel.

Schedule

1. 8/26	President's Chapel (TBD)	Tim Tomlinson
2. 9/2	Introducing the Apostle's Creed (Jude 3)	Brian Hanson
3. 9/9	I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. (Gen 1:1 or Ps 121:1-2)	Matt Crutchmer
4. 9/16	I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, conceived by the Spirit, born of a virgin (Matt 1:18-25 or Luke 1:26-38)	Rick Shenk
5. 9/23	He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and buried (Matt 16:21 or 1 Cor 15:3-4)	Andy Naselli
6. 9/30	He descended to hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. (Psalm 16:10 or Acts 2:29-32)	Joe Rigney
7. 10/7	He ascended to heaven, is seated at God's right hand. (Heb 1:13)	Jared Compton
8. 10/14	He will come to judge the living and the dead. (John 5:25-29 or Acts 17:30-31)	Chris Bruno
9. 10/21	Global Focus	Joe Berg
10. 10/28	Global Focus	Scott Pittman
11. 11/4	Chancellor's Chapel (TBD)	John Piper
12. 11/11	I believe in the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-14 or Joel 2:28-32)	Lew Guest
13. 11/18	I believe in the holy catholic church, the communion of saints (Matt 16:18-19 or 1 Tim 3:15)	Zach Howard
14. 12/2	I believe in the forgiveness of sins (Ps 32:1-2 or Eph 1:7)	John Beckman
15. 12/9*	I believe in the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting (1 Cor 15:42-49)	Brian Tabb

SAFETY AND SECURITY REMINDERS | FALL 2020

Our campus is located in an urban area where crime does sometimes happen. While we trust the Lord and recognize that our safety is ultimately in his hands, we have always taken necessary precautions to help our students remain safe. In light of the unrest in Minneapolis in late May and early June, we will remind our students and staff of our normal safety precautions and give additional instructions as outlined below.

While the city has been much calmer since the protests and riots and we have every reason to be optimistic about the ongoing security of our campus and surrounding areas, we want to be wise and appropriately cautious.

Normal Safety Procedures

As usual, access to any Bethlehem College & Seminary buildings (including the library, Hanson Building, and student housing) will be limited to students, staff, and authorized guests. The church facilities team will provide additional security instructions during Orientation.

Students will be instructed about how to conduct themselves in a wise and safe way in the surrounding neighborhoods, including stricter prohibitions against walking or running alone for students who live in campus housing and near the church.

Additional Emphases in Fall 2020

During Orientation and throughout the semester as necessary, students will be reminded of the security and safety procedures.

The director of student life will brief the students on how to engage with unknown persons around campus and whether and when to call 911.

In the unlikely event that there is rioting or unrest near the Downtown Campus, faculty, staff, and other members of the North and South campuses have volunteered to host students overnight.

Ongoing Facilities and Classroom Procedures

	In-Person/Virtual Hybrid Scenario	Virtual-Only Scenario
Building and Facilities Procedures Contact: Connie Kopischke, Jason Abell, Bethlehem Baptist Church Custodial Team	<p>Continue to follow building security measures in the church building, the Hanson building, the library, and student housing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only authorized persons will be allowed to enter the building and the third-floor classroom space. Faculty and staff will be reminded to exercise extra caution, particularly during evening hours. New students will be instructed about our regular security measures during orientation, and returning students will be reminded of these measures. <p>Use larger rooms and keep 6-foot distance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put space between professor and first row of students. <p>Plan for cohorts to keep the same classroom and for professors to move.</p> <p>Everyone will disinfect their own surfaces when students enter and leave.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cleaning supplies and training provided by the church. Require cohorts to use only the in-classroom bathroom and disinfect after each use. <p>Disinfect hands when entering and leaving the classroom.</p> <p>Wear masks in the classroom as required by the CDC or the state of Minnesota.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher education institutions. Students and staff in higher education institutions must comply with the requirements of this Executive Order, except that students and faculty are permitted to wear face shields as an alternative to face coverings in the following situations: 	<p>Live Zoom meetings, adapting syllabi and assignments as necessary.</p>

- When faculty are teaching a class or giving a lecture, or when students are participating in classroom activities, where it is important for the face to be seen (for example, certain activities in language or communications classes).
- Where a face covering may pose a hazard due to the nature of the class or activity (for example, in a laboratory component of a class).
- When staff or faculty are providing direct support student services and a face covering impedes the service being provided.

Separate entrance and exit

- Set by the church.
- Elevator limited to those who need it, and two people at a time, per the church's guidelines.

Limit the number of people in the kitchenette to one at a time.

The lounge will be reconfigured for maximum distance and reduced use.

All assignments and handouts are electronic.

Isolate and test if sick (following CDC guidelines).

- Require or strongly encourage flu vaccination to reduce impact.
- Provide or encourage flu vaccination.

Classroom and Academic Procedures

Contact: Brian Tabb, Chris Bruno, Connie Kopischke

Move meetings online when possible.

- Faculty office hours online.
- Staff meetings online.
- Table Talk can meet online, students stay in their classrooms during the lunch hour.

Stagger class times to ensure students are entering and exiting at different times.

- Save blocks for Table Talk, chapel, and staff meetings.

Strict attendance will be kept (including any guests who may visit) to trace contact.

Spread out class times.

- Use the Noon–2pm slot for classes as needed.
- More time between classes whenever disinfecting.
- Mon–Fri: 8am, 10am, Noon, 2pm, using Noon–2pm as an additional course period, with the exception of Thursdays and Wednesdays (chapel).
- Restructure courses to meet in one-hour blocks, schedule courses Mon–Fri, 8am–5pm.
- Some 4-credit courses could meet once a week rather than twice a week (ex: 8am–Noon or 2–6pm or Noon–4pm).
- Some courses could meet in 4- to 6-week blocks.
- If needed, seminary cohorts could meet at the North or South campuses to use larger spaces.

Divide large classes if necessary.

- Mostly divided already with the new undergraduate curriculum, but some others may either divide or go online.

Fellowship is in classroom or online—not in hallways.

Adapt syllabi and assignments to fit Zoom meetings as deemed necessary. Consider pre-recording lectures where appropriate.

- In-person fellowship is only within a cohort, and only within the classroom.
- Any cross-cohort community is exclusively online.

The standard procedure in the classroom is that Zoom is always an option.

- This will accommodate sick students or sick professors with zero advance notice.
- All professors will be prepared to instruct via Zoom when necessary; students and professors will use an abundance of caution when determining whether to stay home, and professors will teach through Zoom to accommodate confirmed COVID-19 cases or related long-term absences, if needed.
- Using Zoom or other technologies for isolated absences will be at the professor's discretion.

<p>Library Procedures</p> <p>Contact: Barbara Winters</p>	<p>Maintain regular schedule. Appliances should not be in use. Any eating and drinking in library spaces will follow CDC guidelines.</p> <p>Students observe 6-foot distance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use diagonal seating at the carrels, thus reducing seating by half. • Only two people at a time in the conference room. <p>Students individually disinfect their own surfaces when they enter and exit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disinfect books before shelving. • Cleaning supplies provided by the school. • Use two available bathrooms; each user disinfects after use. <p>Students disinfect hands when entering and exiting library.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One hand sanitizer at front desk. <p>Staff Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library cleaning procedures. The following should be done at the end of each work day (without exception), as well as throughout the day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Disinfect all desk surfaces. ○ Disinfect printer after each shift/individual use. ○ Use a Lysol spray or wipe to clean the screen and handles. ○ Disinfect library computer keyboards. ○ Disinfect all door handles. ○ Disinfect all light switches. ○ Clean bathroom sinks. 	<p>Allow for limited student use of library and/or provide minimal staff to meet student requests.</p>
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