



Guidelines and Suggestions for Smaller Group Gatherings

Prior to the start of the fall semester, we had shared with the congregation that we will not be holding in-person gatherings for Sunday services throughout the rest of the calendar year. While we plan to continue to monitor the effects of the pandemic in our local regions, we believe this to be the wisest and most loving decision. However, this does not lessen the importance for us to continue meeting together virtually or in smaller gatherings as people feel comfortable (Heb. 10:24-25). For those who do feel comfortable, it may be beneficial to gather in smaller groups (i.e., 2-4 families, friends and roommates) to participate in our virtual Sunday services, Community Groups, or for fellowship and discipleship. Below are some guidelines and suggestions that you may use and share with others as you plan for such smaller group gatherings (less than 25 people indoors).

We also want to remind everyone that first, these suggestions are not comprehensive. We advise everyone to refer to [CDC guidelines for gatherings](#) and to prayerfully consider the wisest practices that are appropriate for you and your group. Second, in-person gatherings are not mandatory nor are we endorsing them as a “more spiritual option” by any means. Simply see this as a resource that is available for those who feel comfortable considering smaller group gatherings *in addition* to outdoor and virtual ones (which we do encourage as weather permits!).

For Guests

- Do not attend if you are sick, experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, or if you have been exposed to someone with the virus.
- Do not attend if you recently traveled (less than 2-weeks) to high-risk areas either out-of-state or out-of-country.
- Maintain the wearing of masks for the safety of others. CDC recommends and our state requires children 2 years and older to wear masks unless unable due to health reasons.
- Maintain appropriate distance between members of different households as able.
- Wash your hands with soap and water (for at least 20 seconds) upon arrival at the gathering and upon returning to your home. Make use of hand sanitizers as appropriate during the gathering.
- Avoid hand-shaking and hugging, opting instead for gestures like elbow bumping that avoid skin-to-skin contact.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands. Cover any cough or sneeze.
- If consuming snacks or drinks, remember to maintain distance when taking off masks.
- Do your best to attend to your personal bathrooms before arriving.
- Please do not take offense if the host announces certain requests (e.g., parts of the house that are to be avoided) or if you are reminded to follow any of these guidelines. If you are unsure what the host is comfortable with, instead of assuming, ask questions to get clarification.
- Prior to the meeting, discuss with other parents what may be the best practice for children depending on their age and ability.

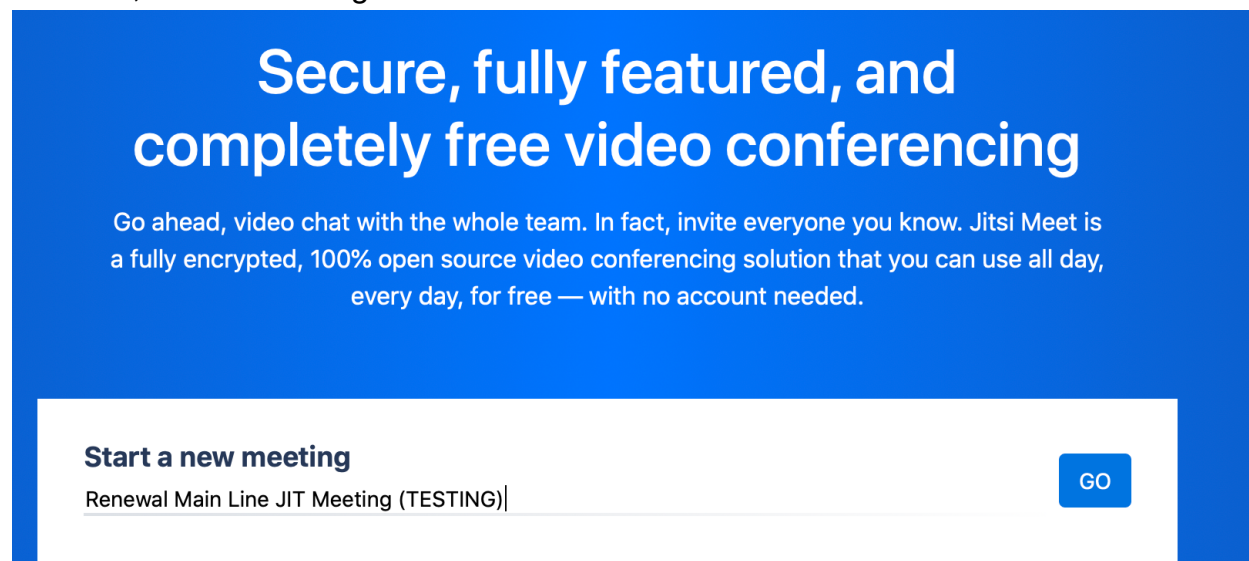
For Hosts

- Fully disinfect all surfaces that are accessible to guests before and after your gathering.
- Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, and other methods. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk.
- Consider designating separate spaces for guests' belongings (e.g., separate spaces for jackets).
- If possible, refrain from serving meals where food and drink are served family or buffet-style. If you wish to do so, provide any food or drink individually (i.e., prepackaged drinks and snacks with disposable utensils).
- Specify to your guests which bathroom(s) (if any) are available for use. Give any notification prior to guest arrival if bathrooms are only available for emergencies.
- Refrain from distributing handouts (i.e., Bible studies, praise sheets) and either use a TV monitor or encourage the use of individual devices.
- Prior to the meeting, discuss with other parents what may be the best practice for children depending on their age and ability.

While these guidelines and suggestions reduce the risk of transmission, they themselves cannot guarantee a virus-free environment (nothing can in any situation). Yet it will be helpful to communicate to one another the steps that are being taken to be as safe as possible. We recommend that you receive peoples' affirmation of these guidelines (or a modified version) prior to your gathering.

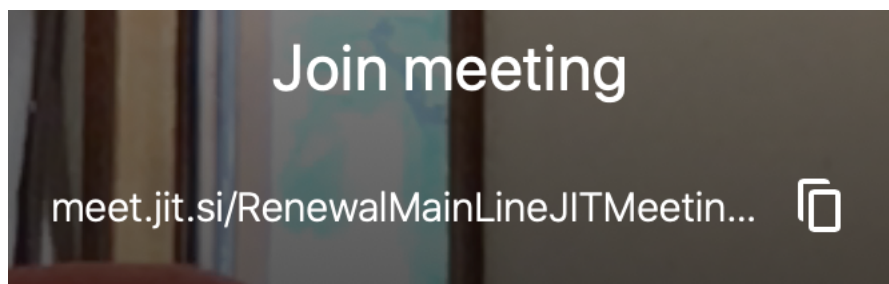
Lastly, please keep in mind to be understanding and supportive to each person's conscience and to engage in continual dialogue with those who may not participate in these smaller group gatherings. Therefore, we still encourage the use of virtual options:

For smaller virtual gatherings, we recommend using JITSI: <https://meet.jit.si> (Chrome web browser only). Simply type in the name of your meeting, hit “GO” and you are now in a safe, secure meeting.



The screenshot shows a blue header with the text "Secure, fully featured, and completely free video conferencing". Below this is a white box containing the text "Start a new meeting" and a text input field with the value "Renewal Main Line JIT Meeting (TESTING)". To the right of the input field is a blue button with the text "GO".

To invite others to your meeting, click the two rectangles and copy the link to forward to your guests.



For larger virtual gatherings, we encourage the use of ZOOM. Community Groups have their own assigned Zoom account. Please contact your CG leader with your proposed time of your meeting so he/she may reserve that time slot for you as well as with the ZOOM link and password.

We understand that COVID-19 has brought many changes with the way we go about our normal activities. This includes our way of “doing church.” Nevertheless, let us not forget the many amazing testimonies of God’s glory in the lives of those in uncomfortable situations. Let us continue to praise him in any and every situation!