



June 8-10, 2022 Renaissance Schaumburg Convention Center  
**2022 Northern Illinois Annual Conference**

## **Statement on COVID-19 Safety Measures and Requirements from the Annual Conference Committee**

Throughout this pandemic season, the mantra of the Northern Illinois Conference has been “Do No Harm.” With this in mind, the Annual Conference Committee has made the safety and well-being of our members, staff, volunteers, and visitors the single most important priority in the planning for this year’s annual conference. As infection rates improve and restrictions are lifted, the NIC committee is excited to move forward with a plan for an in-person annual conference in 2022. This will be our first in-person gathering since 2019. While many groups are beginning to gather, we are mindful that this event is significantly larger than most gatherings and special care is required to “do no harm.”

*Health and safety protocols will continue to be evaluated based on guidance and requirements from federal, state, and local health authorities and will be adjusted accordingly throughout the spring and leading up to the conference.*

While we are excited to come together for the 183rd Session of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference June 8-10, 2022 at the Renaissance Convention Center in Schaumburg, the look and flow of our sessions will not be what we remember. The conference has been simplified in order to create as safe an environment as possible and recognizing the challenges of staffing in the hospitality industry.

### **WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**Vaccines:** Members and attendees must be vaccinated to attend the conference. Vaccination verification will be included in the registration form.

*If a lay member to annual conference or the alternate is not vaccinated, the local church should work with their District Superintendent on electing someone to fill the vacancy.*

*The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) definition of Fully Vaccinated: A person has received their primary series of COVID-19 vaccines; 2 doses from Pfizer or Moderna, or 1 dose from Johnson & Johnson. Scientists are continuing to monitor how long COVID-19 vaccine protection lasts. Recent studies show that protection against the virus may decrease over time. This reduction in protection has led CDC to recommend that everyone ages 12 years and older get a booster shot after completing their primary vaccination series.*

**Masking:** At this time, masking of annual conference attendees will be optional. Masks will not be required. Those who feel more comfortable masked are invited to do so. Seating will be assigned by masking preference for the sessions.

*If infection rates rise, you should be prepared to wear an N95, KN95 or similar approved mask over the nose and mouth in all public spaces, plenary session and legislative sections. Masks will be available on-site as well.*



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**Hand Sanitizing:** Frequent hand sanitizing is encouraged. We will work with the conference center on providing sanitizing stations. Consider offering a blessing to those around you instead of a handshake or hug.

**Personal Responsibility:** Attendees are asked to self-monitor and be mindful of any symptoms that might indicate illness, including but not limited to: fever, chills, cough, congestion, fatigue, muscle aches, sore throat, headache or exposure to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 5-10 days. If any of these symptoms are present, please refrain from attending the conference.

**Safety Measures:**

- **No on-site registration** will be available. You must pre-register for your safety and that of the staff and volunteers. Registration opens April 4th.
- Only persons who provide proof of vaccination during registration will be credentialed.
- Tables in the conference center will be spaced apart as much as possible and there will be reduced seating around tables.
- The event schedule will be altered to allow for shorter plenary sessions and longer breaks.
- Group meals will not be hosted on-site. If groups wish to meet, they can make arrangements at local restaurants. General food options will be available at the hotel.
- Group singing is still under consideration. Circumstances closer to the conference date will dictate our decision.
- Due to the complexities of Health and Safety protocols for children, no childcare will be offered this year.

The Annual Conference Committee is grateful for your cooperation in keeping this meeting safe as we live out our Christian compassion of care for ourselves and our neighbors while "Doing No Harm."