

WORSHIP PROTOCOLS DURING THE COVID-19 RETURN TO WORSHIP

Background: Worship has been suspended for several months due to the COVID-19 virus in order to protect one another from spreading the virus. It has been determined that “Social Distancing”, frequent hand washing, deep cleaning, face masks, protective gloves, and other protocols help to reduce the spread of the virus.

Purpose: To establish protocols/guidelines to follow when we return to worship gatherings of larger groups. The virus will still be a threat and we want to establish disciplines that will keep everyone safe. As a congregation, we need to know that everyone will be disciplined and respect the space and safety of everyone in order that we can see and hear one another as we give God glory.

Protocols: These protocols are presented in chronological order from the time you prepare to come and worship until you depart from the church parking lot.

1. Before departing your home:
 - Take your temperature. If you are 99 degrees or higher, please stay at home.
 - Wash hands.
 - Pack a face mask.
2. Parking lot at church:
 - Put on face mask.
 - Keep at least 6 feet between you and others.
3. Entering church building:
 - There will be no greeters.
 - An usher will open the outside door for you.
 - Hand sanitizer will be available at the bottom of the stairs for you to use before touching the stair handrail.
 - There will be more hand sanitizer in the sanctuary.
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 - Another usher, wearing gloves, will hand you a bulletin.

4. Entering the sanctuary for worship:

- An usher will seat you (Note: People will be seating with 6 feet separation. People will be seated from the front to the rear in order to avoid repeatedly being passed by others entering.)
- The offering plate will be placed at the entrance to the sanctuary to avoid passing the plate. An usher will bring the plate up during the offertory without passing the plate.
- At the end of worship, the ushers will release you from the rear pews first to the front pews last.
- We will not use and handle the hymnals; rather, all hymns will be printed in the bulletin. Since it is difficult to sing with a mask on, we will only sing two verses. Hymnals will be removed from the pews during this transitional period.

5. Holy Communion:

- We will remain in the pews for Communion.
- Bread and grape juice will be pre-packaged by Altar Care volunteers who will be masked and wearing protective gloves.
- Ushers will extend the zip lock bags from each side of the pews to avoid extra handling.

6. Choir and Bell Choir:

- We will continue to offer anthems, solos, and other special music while observing the distancing and protection protocols. The Choir will not sing as an entire Choir.
- The Bell Choir space may be modified to keep proper distancing and the passing to and from of the bells. The Bell Choir is looking at options, but may not perform for now.

7. Departing the sanctuary and church building:

- An usher will dismiss you one at a time. Depart to the rear of the sanctuary. Go down the steps and exit. Take your bulletin home. Do not stop to converse inside the church. Wait until you find a space in the parking lot that will not block others.
- An usher will open and close the door.
- By following these protocols after worship, we can reduce the deep cleaning requirements from touching surfaces in the church.

Departing the parking lot:

- After you are in your vehicle, you may remove your mask.
- Do not approach vehicles when masks are removed. Keep at least 6 feet of space. (Speak loud so folks do not need to come near!)

Exceptions:

- If you need to speak to the pastor or other leaders in the church, arrange to reserve a space in an office, Fellowship Hall, or classroom ahead of time.
- You may coordinate this with an usher for an unplanned meeting. This will give us accountability and those areas can be deep cleaned by our janitor.

Thank you for your cooperation.