

# Reopening First Church Buildings for Worship Services

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Arriving to the Church

- **Will people be required to wear masks?** Yes. Masks are required to be worn to enter the church building and throughout the service. We encourage the wearing of masks in the parking lot and while outside of the church building where people are gathered.
- **What kind of masks are recommended?** Masks should not have exhalation valves or breathing vents, without using a second mask to prevent escape of virus germs or taping over the valves/vents. Please do not use a bandana as a mask for church as bandanas are usually made of a loosely woven fabric that does not offer the same level of protection as a disposable mask or most two-layer, hand-made masks.
- **Will people be required to bring their own mask, or will masks be provided?** Please bring your own mask that covers your nose and mouth. (See prior question for type of masks that are recommended or not.) We will have a limited supply of recommended masks to offer to those who forget to bring a mask or do not have a recommended type of mask.
- **How will people park?** Parking will be much the same as usual, with one exception: The Camden Avenue parking area and entrance will be reserved for persons with mobility challenges who will then enter the building through the Camden Avenue doors near the Church Office.
- **How will people enter the facilities, so they do not have to touch door handles?** Weather permitting, the doors will be open and remain open during the arrival of congregants. Persons with mobility challenges should use the Camden Avenue entrance nearest the Church Office. All other persons should use the Pleasant Valley Avenue entrance for Sanctuary seating or the doors to Fellowship Hall Building from the Courtyard or back parking lot for seating there.
- **Where will hand sanitizers be placed?** Hand sanitizers will be located inside the building close to each entrance. We encourage using hand sanitizer when you enter the building and as you exit. You may wish to bring additional hand sanitizer with you.
- **What if you are feeling sick or have a cough or fever or have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19 or other contagious disease?** We respectfully ask you to remain home, call your doctor and monitor your health in accordance with the directions of your doctor. Services will be live streamed for viewing at home on Facebook or YouTube.
- **Can I cut through Fellowship Hall Building or the Education Building to get to the Sanctuary?** No, in order to maintain social distancing protocols, we ask that you do not cut through or walk through the other buildings, and doors that are not designated as entrances should not be used except as emergency exits. If you have difficulty walking, please use the Camden Avenue entrance by the Church Office where you can have a shorter walk and/or ease of access, and be seated close to that entrance.
- **Do I need to come early to get a seat?** As described below, seating will be on a first-come/first-served basis and will take a longer time than pre-COVID-19, as we learn to do this while maintaining social distances. We do advise that you arrive at least 15 minutes earlier than you normally would.

## Worship Experience

- **Must congregants wear masks and gloves?** Congregants must wear masks covering their noses and mouths at all times when inside the church buildings, and are encouraged to wear masks in the parking lot and while outside of the church buildings. Gloves are not required but congregants may wear them if they prefer.
- **Will ushers be gloved and masked?** Ushers will be masked, but will not be required to wear gloves. Please remember to maintain social distance from our ushers, too. Ushers will help to direct you as we all become familiar with these new protocols, but they, too, need the protection of masks and social distancing, so they will not be handing out bulletins as they did before COVID-19. Bulletins will be available for you to pick up on your way in, if you need one. (See below.)
- **Will bulletins be available at the service?** We will continue to distribute an electronic version of the Order of Worship and Announcements in advance of the service that you can print and bring with you or access using your smart phone during service. Paper bulletins will be available for those who do not have access to the electronic bulletin. These will be distributed outside before you enter the church building.
- **Where will you be seated for worship?** You may be seated either in the Sanctuary or Fellowship Hall (where the service will be live streamed). We will seat congregants in the Sanctuary up to a capacity of 100 persons (including pastors, musicians, worship leader, and ushers). We can accommodate an additional 60 -80 in Fellowship Hall.
- **What if we have more than 160-180 people attend service?** While we do not expect this to happen, if attendance approaches our capacity, we will either add another service or add live streaming from the Heritage Room.
- **Can I sit in the same pew where I have always been seated?** Unfortunately, we cannot reserve specific seats for congregants. In order to maintain social distancing protocols, seating will be on a first come/first seated basis. Ushers will direct you to the next available seat as follows:
  - **In the Sanctuary:** Seating will be filled from the front of the church to the back. Seats will alternate pews, with one pew having aisle seating and the next pew having middle of the pew seating. Parties of one to two persons will be seated in the middle of a pew; larger parties will be seated on the aisles.
  - **In Fellowship Hall:** Window and wall seats will be filled first, then aisle seats from the front of FH to the back. Each row of seating will accommodate up to 5 persons and chairs may be moved to accommodate parties of different sizes. Some table seating may be available, too.
- **Will singing by the congregation be permitted?** No, as with our outdoor services, singing will not be permitted by the congregation until further notice. We do encourage humming, clapping, raising of hands and standing during hymns and praise songs!
- **How will we collect the offering, without passing an offering plate?** We will have offering plates or baskets placed near the exits of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall. Also, electronic giving and mail remain available alternatives. (For electronic giving see our website: [https://www.meetwithgod.com/news-events/give-to-the-church/.](https://www.meetwithgod.com/news-events/give-to-the-church/))

- **How will we provide a safe Communion experience?** We will have individual communion servings available for you to pick up before you are seated. Please dispose of the packaging in a waste basket as you leave the building.
- **Will restrooms be available for use?** Yes, if you need to use the restrooms during the service, we ask that you use the designated restrooms, one person (or family unit) at a time. Each restroom will have spray disinfectant and hand wipes that can be used to spray or wipe any areas that you may touch. Please allow any fan to remain running after you leave the restroom.
- **Will there be any special protocol for exiting the Sanctuary/Fellowship Hall?** Yes. At the close of service, we ask that you please remain seated until the ushers direct your row to exit. The back rows will be directed to exit first, and aisle seats may exit before middle seats, in order to maintain social distancing. We ask that there be no gatherings of congregation in any locations within the Church buildings, before or after the service, so we ask that when your row is directed to exit, that you move promptly to the outside of the building, and be mindful to maintain at least 6' distance from others who are not members of your household.
- **Will there be a coffee hour?** Yes, we will continue to have coffee hour served outside in the back parking lot, weather permitting. While outside the church buildings, masks are encouraged to be worn and must be worn if you are not able to maintain social distancing.
- **If I am not able or uncomfortable returning to indoor worship at this time, will I be able to watch the service online?** Yes. We will continue to live stream our services on Facebook and YouTube. Normally, this will be available simultaneously with the service.
- **How will you address situations when people do not follow social-distancing and other protocols for safe attendance at these services?** Ushers will be instructed to ask anyone who is not complying with these procedures to comply or leave. We will have a supply of masks that can be offered to those who do not bring one.

## Nursery and Sunday School

- **Will you allow children in the service?** Yes. Children are welcome to attend worship service with their families if they are able to wear masks. You are encouraged to bring coloring books or other suitable materials for them. We will not be providing Nursery services at this time, and the Parlor (a/k/a The Upper Room) will be closed as it is too small a space to allow for safe social distancing for more than a few people.
- **May children have snacks during service?** No food or beverages are permitted during service or inside the church buildings.
- **Will my children be able to attend Sunday School while I attend service?** We will not be offering Sunday School at this time, but we encourage you to consider our Young Followers program for K through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade on Thursday late afternoons. Next meeting will be November 12<sup>th</sup>. You may contact Donna Banes for more information at [donna@meetwithGod.com](mailto:donna@meetwithGod.com).)

## Safety Precautions, Attendance and Accessibility Questions

- **What are you doing to make the Sanctuary and Fellowship a safe space for indoor worship?** The Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall have been, and will continue to be, professionally cleaned after each service, followed by sanitizing all hard surfaces by a team of volunteers (recruits welcome). We will use either a sanitizing spray mist or wipes to sanitize pews, doors, hand-sanitizers, and, in Fellowship Hall, windows cranks and locks, tables and chairs. All hymnals, Bibles, pencils and paper have been removed from pews to prevent contact spreading of germs. To improve ventilation in the Sanctuary, our HVAC has been dialed to maximum outside air as a percent of air flow, and we will leave the interior doors open for maximum air circulation in the Narthex as well. In Fellowship Hall, we have the ability to open windows for fresh air ventilation. If it is too cold for opening of some windows, we can use the exhaust fan system coupled with opening of two windows on either side of FH to draw fresh air in. In addition, we have developed a protocol that requires all persons participating in indoor worship to wear masks covering nose and mouth at all times. Seating will be well spaced to allow for social distancing to be maintained. Ushers will direct congregants where to sit in order to minimize compromising social distance. Space will be left unoccupied near the Praise Team and in front of the Pastors. Congregational singing will not be permitted. Hand sanitizers will be available near the entrance.
- **Will the church be taking attendance in case contact tracing becomes necessary?** Yes. We will be taking attendance before you enter the church building. If your contact information is not up-to-date in the church records, this is a good time to update it. Visitors will be asked to provide their preferred contact information.
- **I have mobility difficulties and would like to sit in the “Amen Corner”. Is that possible?** Yes. We are reserving the Amen Corner and seating on the outside aisle on the left side of the church (near the church office) for our congregants who have mobility challenges. We are also designating parking near the church office, and the entrance by the church office, for their convenience as well.