**CUMC Church re-opening PREPAREdness plan 03.09.2021**

**The church will Follow Gov. Walz policies and new CDC guidelines for re-opening our church:**

On Feb. 12, 2021, MN state policy for places of worship allows places of worship a limited occupancy of 50% of its normal occupancy, and a maximum of 250, with appropriate safety guidelines. Many things have happened since. Cases surged in November 2020, but they have now come down to levels that are some of the lowest since the pandemic started. Based on these early March data, we as church leadership have decided to begin reopening on March 21st using our Reopening Preparedness Plan.

**CUMC re-opening plan:**

1. The entire church will be deep cleaned. Frequent places of human contact, such as pews, bathrooms, doorknobs, light switches, and microphones will be sanitized.
2. Only chemicals and disinfectants that have EPA-registration as effective against COVID-19 will be used.
3. Preschool and children’s areas will have added consideration for sanitation. Removing everything nonessential from the room to limit surfaces for potential contamination and do a thorough cleaning in between uses.
4. Bibles hymnals, pens, information cards, etc., will be temporarily removed from the backs of pews.
5. Signs will be posted about not shaking hands and doing non-contact greetings. Promote the hashtag #itsoktosmileandwave.
6. Place taped or blocks for proper spacing for areas in the sanctuary or classrooms to ensure social distancing. Tape, remove chairs, use cones, etc. to indicate the distance needed.
7. Tell congregation through social media, through the newsletter and during worship about how we prepared the church for their arrival. Be sure to use the words “clean, safe, and mindful of health needs and issues in preparation for a non-touch experience” or something similar. Also, we will say that if you are sick, then you should not be present and can join online instead.

**Worship TIMES AND LOCATION:**

1. We will continue online meeting options for those who are not yet comfortable attending in-person or unable to attend service in person. Many churches have seen a spike in engagement since their online presence has increased. We should capitalize on it!
2. In time, we will consider offering multiple services to encourage a greater chance of social distancing. One way to ensure our services are evenly spread is to have people register for a service. We will be making use of an on-line rsvp.church platform and phone-in reservations. With questions, we will direct people to reach out to our Office Ad., Joanie Webster.
3. Only one service, with limited attendees will take place and areas will be cleaned after the service. We have noted that some churches are moving to having multiple services during the week to allow for cleaning in between service times.
4. As volunteers are needed to assist with cleaning, these volunteers will be limited to those who do not have preexisting conditions and those who are under 65 years old, or those that have been vaccinated.

**WORSHIP SERVICEs:**

1. Masks will be required for everyone attending or participating in worship. At all in-person gatherings, we will ask that people from the same household sit together, while other family groups follow safe distancing policy (at least 6 ft apart).
2. We will not be using bulletins, and announcements and other out-reach opportunities will be presented on screens. We will also not be allowing people pick up bulletins out of stacks.
3. Regarding communion, the elements will not be provided unless safe conditions allow.
4. Microphones will not be passed or utilized by any congregational member on the stage.
5. Choirs will not perform in worship services.
6. Initially only pre-recorded music or live instrumental music will be played. Later small praise teams (1 to 3) will be utilized for music, but the congregants will not sing, chant or recite during service or other programming, as the act of singing may contribute to transmission of COVID-19, even with a mask precaution to other close within 6 ft.
7. We will continue to offer online giving options, and we will have stations at the exists of the sanctuary in the church where people can drop offerings instead of passing a plate.
8. The pulpit will be cleaned after every use.
9. Attendees will be allowed into the building 10 minutes prior, and when existing the sanctuary and church, they will do so in an orderly, phased way to ensure there is adequate social distance between each family group.
10. Groups will be asked not to gather, linger, or have any extended conversations indoors before or after service to minimize the potential for viral transmission.

**AMENITIES: COFFEE, BULLETINS, AND HAND SANITIZER**

1. **Restrooms:** Usage will be limited to one family unit at a time. We will post signs about washing hands in bathrooms with appropriate guidelines to doing so.
2. Do not hand out bulletins. Do not allow people to come by and pick them up out of stacks.
3. CUMC will be withholding coffee stations, donuts, or groups meals until further notice after re-opening. We will stay attuned to the guidelines to know when is best to reintroduce these services.
4. Hand sanitizer stations will be provided throughout the church.
5. Masks will be provided for those without one to increase comfort levels**.**

**STAFF: GREETERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

1. Provide masked ushers to be both inside and outside greeters. These will be instructed on how to appropriately greet and seat people.
2. Doors will be propped open or greeters will hold them open to avoid personal contact on door handles.
3. All hospitality servers will be trained before re-opening to answer questions on procedures and policies upon the return to the building.
4. Where possible greeters will monitor bathrooms to minimize crowding with people from different households.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL AND SMALL GROUPS**

1. Sunday school and Nursery will not be open until at least April 21, and only then if enough volunteers are available to ensure “Safe Gatherings” compliance. Limited in-person confirmation and youth programming on Wed. evening, along with on-line gathering via zoom until conditions allow for less restricted in-person gathering. Other small group meetings will take place on-line via zoom until conditions allow for in-person gathering. Groups will be spaced appropriately to maintain social distance standards. Surfaces will be cleaned after each gathering. If classes and other outside groups are utilizing the facility, they will be required to clean the doorknobs, water fountains, and other high traffic areas in between uses.
2. Each church leader and class leader will be educated on church requirements for safe gatherings.
3. If we chose not to hold small groups in-person, we will continue on-line engagement for life groups.

**PRESCHOOL AND CHILDREN and pumpkin Patch**

1. The American Academy of Pediatrics [recommends that children 2 years of age and under](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/Cloth-Face-Coverings-for-Children-During-COVID-19.aspx)not wear masks or face coverings. This will stand as our policy also.
2. If Pumpkin Patch is operating during MN state mask mandates, children > 2 yrs. and teachers will be required to wear one.
3. Children will be pre-registered to limit how many are in any room at a time. Some churches are starting with a five-child limit in each room at first.
4. Until conditions become less restrictive, leaders for the preschool and children’s areas will use common sense judgement for their participation in in-person gatherings, such as limiting their role if they have a pre-existing condition, or are over 65 and are unvaccinated.
5. We will only have one-person handling child check in stations and any check-in device will not be passed or presented to anyone else.
6. Parents should not be allowed in child rooms, but rather should pick them up at the Welcome Center.
7. A check list of what has been cleaned and when in each room has been cleaned will be visible to everyone.
8. A list of procedures will be used to educate our volunteers through Zoom prior to the first meeting.

**CHOIRS, ORCHESTRAS, PRAISE TEAMS, BANDS, ETC.**

1. **Praise Teams**: Pre-recorded or instrumental music initially, then only limited membership, such as only Lars and Chloe, or only limited numbers, and use assigned microphones and use the same one every time.
2. **Choir:** For the foreseeable future choir and bell choir will not practice or perform. These groups will be reintroduced when community infection conditions are appropriate for each practice. In such case, members will be spaced appropriately relative to the current virus infection conditions.
3. Hymnals will not be used for the foreseeable future.
4. Wind and brass instruments: Because of the higher risk of expelling respiratory droplets from these instruments, they will not be allowed for the foreseeable future, until conditions improve to allow their use.
5. Music stands will be wiped after each use.
6. When used, the choir will be dismissed in a fashion to allow distancing.

**TECH TEAMS**

1. All tech. equipment will be cleaned after every use, including, but not limited to microphones, headphones, computers, laptops, etc. A record will be kept and posted when each item was cleaned. WATER WILL NOT BE USED! Appropriate COVID-19-approved cleaners for electrical and computer equipment will be used.
2. If possible, the tech team will be rotated.
3. Services will continue to be provided online, as currently being used on multiple platforms.
4. We will continue to add additional text on screens through projectors.



Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_