

Procedures for Safety at Worship

On September 15, 2020 the Session voted unanimously to open our sanctuary for worship again beginning on Sunday, November 1st. Like for the returned exiles, it will not be the same. The pandemic is not over. We must adapt. The Session has approved following procedures to enhance our safety:



Arrival/Entering:

1. Volunteers wearing masks and gloves will greet worshipers at the church entrances. They will assure that everyone entering is wearing a mask and remind worshipers that masks are to be worn covering mouth and nose throughout the time in the church building. The greeters will have a supply of disposable face masks for those without. For the safety of everyone, those refusing to wear a mask will not be allowed to enter.
2. The greeter will open the door so worshipers do not need to touch the door handles.
3. New touchless motion directed hand sanitizer machines will be purchased and placed at each entrance. Greeters will see that they are used by everyone entering.
4. Greeters with gloves will hand worshippers a bulletin with worship liturgy and announcements.

In the Sanctuary:

5. **Seating Arrangement:** Pews have been marked with tape to indicate proper social distancing between worshipers. Families may sit together. Otherwise, worshipers will be required to sit at indicated locations. Our sanctuary's seating capacity in this way can accommodate 50 or so worshipers. The balcony can accommodate more in excess to this.



6. **Pews:** cushions, hymnals, Bibles, brochures, pencils have been removed, to provide a sanitized space.
7. **Singing:** We are investigating where singing with masks on will be safe. A cantor located in the front of the sanctuary will sing. There will be no choral anthems at this time, but continued special music by individuals.
8. **Sacrament of Holy Communion:** Worshipers will be invited to come forward to receive the elements. Plastic disposable cups will be used. The pastor and presiding elder wearing masks and serving gloves will hand the elements to each worshiper.
9. **Offering:** Worshipers will be encouraged to send contributions electronically. Worshipers may also place their gifts in offering plates which will be placed at the sanctuary exits at the close of the service.

Exiting the Sanctuary:

10. Usher will dismiss worshipers in a staggered manner to assure social distancing.
11. The pastor and music minister will remain in the chancel while worshipers exist and greet worshipers there from a safe six feet distance.
12. There will be no handshakes or hugs or formal coffee hour.
13. Restrooms will be restricted to one person at a time. Locks will be installed on the doors. Users are asked to lock the door while using, and to sanitize the toilet and sink when finished.

For Those Remaining at Home:

14. The Session encourages those at risk to remain home. For the sake of public safety, those who have a fever, feel sick, traveled, or have had contact with anyone with Covid-19 are required by Law to quarantine themselves.

15. We will continue to broadcast our worship service on *107.5FM and 1290AM radio stations* , and livestream on our Facebook Page. Our new broadcast system is being installed this week and we hope soon to also broadcast our services to our website for those who prefer not to use Facebook.

The Covid-19 pandemic is not over! C.D.C. officials warn that the cooler autumn weather and more indoor activities with heating systems will spike a new rise of Covid-19 cases. The Session also recognizes that social isolation has mental health dangers as well. Depression has sharply risen. We have made this decision with the hope and trust that the measures we are taking and the policies we expect all to follow will balance our health concerns and spiritual needs. The Session trusts that our members and neighbors who join us in our sanctuary for worship will respect and follow these procedures for the safety and welfare of all. The Session will continue to monitor the data the State of Michigan provides daily and may decide to reverse our decision to open at any time.