

Central United Methodist Church: Proposed Guidelines for Gathering

Phase One: Current Situation

Worship Services

- Worship services are pre-recorded and posted online.
- Occasional services conducted on a case-by-case basis in the building or outdoors.

Building Use

- Church building is closed, regular activities are suspended.
- Staff work from home as they are able.
- Small groups and committees encouraged to continue meeting either outdoors (with distancing and masks) or online.

Precautions

- The use of face masks and social distancing of at least 6 feet are expected should people be in the building together.
- Supplies for cleaning and sanitizing the building are collected and stored for use.
- Face masks and automatic hand sanitizer dispensers are procured.
- COVID-19 Response Team meeting twice monthly to report on ongoing adjustments and concerns.

Phase Two: Beginning September 13, 2020, pending continued trend of decreasing virus activity

Worship Services

- **Building is reopened for one worship service on Sunday mornings at 10:30am.**
- **Worship on Sunday mornings will differ from non-pandemic worship in the following ways:**
 - Face coverings or masks are expected and extras are available if needed.
 - Length of worship service reduced to limit exposure in an enclosed space. Additional services to be added as needed and as made possible by church volunteers.
 - Music will be instrumental or offered by soloists or ensembles to decrease potential spread of the virus by congregational singing indoors.
 - High contact items will be removed from sanctuary (hymnals, Bibles, envelopes, etc.)

- Greeting time will be postponed until after the service, and moved outdoors with social distancing and masking in effect. Lingering indoors will be discouraged to help move people in and out more safely.
 - Seating will be limited to ensure at least 6 feet of distance between households.
 - Children will sit with their households for the duration of the entire worship service.
 - Coffee, donuts, etc. will not be offered.
 - Restrooms will be available for emergencies only.
 - Those feeling ill, or who have been around sick individuals will be asked to return home and connect with worship online.
 - Worshipers will be asked to register attendance to aid in contact-tracing should it be needed.
 - Offerings may be left in offering plates by the entrance or exit, use of online giving options will be encouraged.
 - Bulletins, as available, will not be passed out; households will be asked to dispose of their own upon exiting.
 - Individuals at higher risk will be asked to remain at home and connect online for worship.
 - Traffic in and out of the building will be directed, seating will be assigned from back of the sanctuary to the front and will be dismissed row by row to decrease cross-traffic.
 - The balcony will be closed to the general congregation unless overflow seating is needed.
- Sunday worship is available for online participation via a live-stream for those who remain at home.
 - Other worship services and opportunities are developed and offered in alternative locations and/or on other days.
 - Volunteers are recruited and trained to assist in updated building-use protocols and technology.
 - Worship space and areas trafficked in and out will be sanitized before and after use.

Building Use

- Staff are able to work remotely or in the building. Members are asked to call or email to limit visits to the office during the week.
- Wearing masks or face coverings is expected for all in the building, extras are available.
- Hand sanitizer is visibly available, individuals are encouraged to make use of it as they enter or exit.
- Bathrooms remain closed except for emergencies.
- Sunday schools, groups, committees encouraged to meet outdoors or online.

Precautions

- Signs posted reminding people to wear masks, maintain distance, and return home if feeling unwell or if at risk.
- Volunteers trained and assigned to assist with traffic flow, cleaning, and safety precautions.
- Any needed contact tracing is carried out in accordance with health department guidance.
- Use of building reevaluated in the event of virus spreading or numbers rising locally.

Phase Three: Dependent on continued decrease in spread locally. Exact date to be determined after implementation of Phase Two with sufficient time to observe and correct potential problems in protocol and/or compliance.

Worship Services

- Continue as in Phase Two, with continued adaptations for Sunday worship service(s) as necessary.
- Movement back to two distinct worship services will be considered.
- Worship opportunities in addition to Sunday morning are continued.
- Access to services is available online for those who wish to remain at home.

Building Use

- Groups still encouraged to meet outdoors or online.
- Church building reopens for use by church groups (Youth, Sunday schools, etc.) during the week. Face masks are required and available.
- Meetings are limited in size to allow for 6 feet of distance between participants.
- Office hours resume for church staff, with accommodations as needed. Church members are encouraged to call or email to limit visits during the week.
- Scheduling required, alternative days or times for meeting encouraged to reduce cross-traffic.
- Room use is limited to assigned space, with cleaning required before and after use. Supplies will be available.

Precautions

- Signs posted with safety guidelines.
- Use of building evaluated based on groups' compliance with health and safety guidelines.

Phase Four: Continued decline in activity of virus and spread, determined in conversation with advisory committee.

Worship Services

- Sunday services available online
 - Continue cleaning/sanitizing procedures
 - Balcony reopens, seating no longer assigned, family units asked to sit together
 - More doors open for entering and exiting sanctuary
 - Worshipers encouraged to socialize outside while maintaining distance
 - Compliant with state and local regulations regarding face coverings
 - Sunday worship evaluated and services moving more towards pre-pandemic styles
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Building Use

- Church building reopens during the week. Office hours are 8am-5pm Monday - Thursday; 8am-12pm on Friday.
 - Outdoor and virtual gatherings still encouraged
 - Wearing masks and keeping distance still encouraged
 - Cleaning and sanitizing continues by groups in building
 - More groups allowed in the building at the same time
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Precautions

- State, county, local trends are monitored. Increases in virus activity may result in a move back to a previous phase.
- All applicable ordinances are followed within the church building (masking, size limits).
- Cleaning and sanitizing spaces continues.