



United Church of Christ, Congregational

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July 15, 2020

Church Family,

At its meeting in May, Congregational Council began discussions related to reopening the church for in-person worship. A tentative date for returning to in-person worship has been set for our Alive on the Square service on August 23.

Council also agreed on the formation of a Reopening Team. This team has been tasked with developing this Reopening Covenant, which will describe the guidelines that will be in place when we reopen. This team will also be responsible for determining the logistics for services on Sundays, putting together a sanitizing crew, obtaining the necessary protective equipment and supplies, etc.

A “soft opening” for our church building is slated for the following Sunday, August 30. That Sunday will not include the entire congregation. It will be a subset of our church family. That Sunday will serve as a dress rehearsal for our reopening procedures.

Sunday, September 6 will be our first Sunday where the church is open to our entire church family. Church will be different when we reopen on September 6. After considering the recommendations of the CDC, Ohio Department of Health, Heartland Conference UCC, our church Council, and the members of the Reopening Team, the following guidelines have been established.

If you are immunocompromised or have underlying health conditions that may put you at greater risk of complications of COVID-19, we strongly encourage you to stay home and continue to worship online. In addition, if you have been exposed, tested positive or are experiencing any of the symptoms below, please stay home for 2 weeks to keep others safe.

- Before coming to church each week, everyone must perform a health self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms, which include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, muscle aches, or a new loss of taste or smell. If you experience any of those symptoms, do not come to church.
- **EVERYONE** entering the church must wear a face mask. We recommend you bring your own mask if you have one. Masks will be available when you enter the church if you do not have one.
- Please practice social distancing from anyone outside of your own household. This includes Pastor Luke. Please respect his personal space.
- To better allow for social distancing, the 8:15 Chapel service will be held in the Sanctuary.
- Doors will be propped open before and after services if weather permits, to eliminate touching of handles.
- Hand sanitizer stations will be in various locations throughout the building. Please sanitize your hands when both entering and exiting the building.

- Every other pew in the sanctuary will be closed to ensure social distancing.
- Tables and chairs in Fellowship Hall will be spaced to ensure social distancing.
- All pews will be sanitized following each service in the Sanctuary. All tables and chairs will be sanitized following each service in Fellowship Hall.
- Hymnals, Bibles, and Friendship Pads will be removed from the pews/tables. Please bring your own Bible, if you wish.
- The offering plates will be positioned at the entrances to the sanctuary and will not be passed during worship.
- **No full singing.** Studies have shown that full singing is the equivalent of a cough, and propels the virus 12-18 feet, compared to only 3-6 feet for ordinary speaking. Quiet singing or humming is encouraged.
- Communion will be served via individual, prepackaged wafer & juice sets.
- Children will remain with their families during the Children's Sermon.
- There will be no FISH (Sunday School).
- There will be no Nursery.
- No refreshments will be served after any of the services.
- Access to the church office is restricted to church staff and ushers/treasurers.
- Sunday 10:30 worship will continue to be live streamed on the church website and the church's Facebook page.
- Finally, if someone in the church tests positive for COVID-19, the church office will be made aware, and the church will send a notice to the entire congregation letting you know that if you were in attendance on a given date, you may have been exposed to the virus.

Because information and best practices related to the prevention of COVID-19 continue to evolve, this Covenant is intended to be a "living" document. As adjustments to these protocols are warranted, we will update them and notify you.

It is our hope that by adherence to these new procedures, everyone who enters our building will be able to safely worship God. In this time, we must agree to live by faith and not operate in fear, but we must also agree to be proactive and to act in wisdom towards our church family and guests.

Blessings,

Maureen Walker, Immediate Past Moderator

Matt Yates, Moderator Elect

Paul DeSario, PhD, MPH, RS – Cuyahoga County Board of Health

Suzanne Kanner, BSN, RN – Medina County Health Department

Stephanie Manhoff, BSN, RN

Rob Wilder, MD