

Worship Committee

CURRENT WORSHIP GUIDELINES (Updated May 23, 2021)

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has been a stressful and challenging time for our church and others as well. The Worship Committee, working closely with the Parish Nurse, has developed these guidelines to minimize the risk of contracting the virus yet allowing us to once again worship together.

First and foremost, the **guiding force in developing these procedures has been the safety and well-being of all those who attend worship in our church building.** Secondly, we have done our best to **follow PA Department of Health and CDC guidelines to ensure that we do not unnecessarily expose those attending worship to the virus.** Of course, as we have learned, there are no guarantees and **each family and individual must make their own decision to attend or not attend.** If you choose not to attend, we respect and support your decision. We will continue to video our modified worship service and post it to our Facebook page.

Our coming together to worship will be much different than we are used to, and we hope you understand that what we are doing is to ensure your safety and health. As we move forward, we will adjust these guidelines, as necessary. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

In light of recent recommendations from the CDC, Church Council has made changes to our policies for Sunday morning in-person worship. This is what you can expect:

Upon Arrival

- ❖ Everyone will enter by way of the rear (parking lot) entrance to the church
- ❖ Wearing masks is optional (no longer required) for *people who are fully vaccinated*, in accordance with CDC guidelines.
- ❖ People who are not fully vaccinated will still be expected to wear masks throughout the service and during their time in the building. Mask wearing for those who are not vaccinated will be on an honor system.
- ❖ We will continue to practice social distancing, maintaining at least six feet between persons from different households.
- ❖ We will continue our current seating and dismissal practices in the sanctuary.
- ❖ We will no longer check temperatures as people enter the church, but we will continue to track attendance for possible contact tracing.
- ❖ Avoid hand shaking and hugging
- ❖ There will be no hospitality gathering or refreshments
- ❖ Maintain social distancing while moving to the sanctuary

Restroom Etiquette

- ❖ Use restrooms on the upper level only
- ❖ **One person at a time in the rest rooms;** a hospitality person will control access.

- ❖ Wash your hands for 20 seconds before leaving the rest room
- ❖ Rest rooms will be sanitized by a hospitality person after each use
- ❖ Maintain social distancing while waiting to use the rest room

Sanctuary Seating

- ❖ Only use the entrance at the rear of the sanctuary (closest to High St)
- ❖ To maintain social distancing, pews have been marked with yellow tape to indicate where people can sit; families may sit together.
- ❖ **Ushers will lead you to a vacant seating location** (we will try to meet your location request)
- ❖ You may not be able to sit in the pew where you have been used to sitting

Nursery

- ❖ The nursery will only be used for diaper changing and quieting/calming an infant or small child

Worship

- ❖ There will be no bulletins; hymnals and Bibles will be removed from the sanctuary.
- ❖ Unison prayers and hymn text will be displayed on the video screen
- ❖ **There will be no Passing of the Peace**
- ❖ When we celebrate Holy Communion, you will be provided an individual communion packet containing the elements
- ❖ Offering plates will be placed on stands at the entrance/exit doors of the sanctuary; you may place your stewardship gifts in them as you enter or leave the sanctuary.

Departure

- ❖ After the Benediction, **ushers will dismiss people row by row**
- ❖ We will use the exit doors at the front of the sanctuary (towards the parking lot)
- ❖ **Please maintain social distancing** and move directly to the rear door of the building
- ❖ Use hand sanitizer, as needed; they will be strategically located in multiple locations.
- ❖ Please wait to socialize until after you are in the parking lot

Cleaning

- ❖ After each service, top of pew backs and side rails will be sanitized
- ❖ The sanctuary will be closed for a minimum of 48 hours after cleaning
- ❖ All door handles, doorknobs and panic bars will be sanitized; this includes entrance, bathroom, office, music room, sacristy, and chancel doors, and elevator buttons.
- ❖ Water fountain will be sanitized
- ❖ Bathrooms will be sanitized; this includes toilet seats, grab bars, flush handles on toilets and urinals, stall doors, toilet paper dispensers, paper towel dispensers, faucets handles, waste can lids, counter tops and entrance doors.

In Closing

- ❖ These procedures may be different than other churches
- ❖ These procedures will be followed indefinitely
- ❖ These procedures will be updated as health guidance changes
- ❖ The Worship Committee has developed these procedures with the utmost concern for the safety and health of all those who worship at Gettysburg UMC as we pray and wait for a vaccine that will eliminate the threat of the Covid-19 virus.

Please keep our congregation and our leadership in your prayers as we try to navigate these challenging times to the best of our ability.