

## **Christ Presbyterian Church Re-Opening Task Force Proposed Plan**

### **I. Live streaming worship**

Internet broadcast of worship will continue when in-person services resume to allow congregants and visitors an at-home option for worship. We will emphasize to the congregation that they should feel free to continue to worship at home via the livestream.

### **II. Outdoor Vespers Services**

The task force recommends beginning our transition to in-person worship with bi-weekly Vespers services held on specific Sunday afternoons outside on the church grounds.

- Congregants are invited to bring their own chairs; some chairs will be provided for any congregants who do not/are not able to provide their own. Social distancing will be required for all congregants, except for people residing in the same home.
- Masks are required while entering/exiting the worship space. Additionally, congregants will be encouraged to keep masks on for the duration of the service.
- The service will be informal and family-friendly.
- The service will not be live-streamed and will not require additional technology.
- Liturgy/sermons will be based on the elements of worship from the 10:30am service.
- Music will be played by acoustic instruments.
- Congregational singing will be permitted outdoors.
- When communion is served, we will use individually-packaged communion elements.
- Restrooms in the main church building will be open, but only one stall will be considered operational. Congregants are encouraged to use the facilities only on a limited basis. Disinfecting wipes will be provided in the stalls and congregants are encouraged to wipe down all surfaces before each use.

### **III. Proposed Guidelines for In-Person Worship in the Sanctuary**

- Masks
  - All congregants are required to wear masks while entering and leaving the church building, and are urged to keep them on for the duration of the worship service.<sup>1</sup>
- Social distancing
  - The chairs in the sanctuary will be arranged in a way to promote social distancing of at least six feet between individual congregants, except for immediate family members. These requirements will remain in place at all times congregants are in the building. Ushers will assist families with safe-for-all groupings of chairs.
  - Tables will be set up at the back of the sanctuary as an option for families with young children. Appropriate activity sheets will be provided by the Christian Education Ministry Team. The CE Ministry Team will also need to discuss best

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<sup>1</sup> Masks are required by Leon County Ordinance 20-15 (except where persons are separated by at least six feet).

practices with respect to providing materials (e.g., crayons, pencils) or whether parents/guardians should be encouraged to provide their own. The CE Ministry Team will also discuss children's activity bags and removal of the shelved and boxed books and activity items designed for children's use during worship.

- Hand-sanitizer stations
  - Hand sanitizer stations will be provided in key locations and congregants will be encouraged to use them upon entering the church.
- Ventilation
  - In an effort to promote better ventilation of the facilities, the doors to the sanctuary and all exterior doors will remain open for the duration of worship.
  - The Session should consider upgrades to the HVAC system that could help mitigate against recirculating coronavirus particles, if present.
- Temperature Checks/Health Screening
  - Temperature checks and health screening questions will not be required, as those measures can create bottlenecks for entry into the building. Additionally, they do not appear to be sufficiently helpful measures for gauging potential infection.
  - Congregants will be encouraged to stay home if they feel unwell in any way or have potentially been exposed.
- Congregational/Choral Singing
  - There will be no congregational singing at this time, though humming will be allowed and encouraged. The Session may revisit this question as it continues to monitor the situation and current research on the safety of singing in indoor spaces. As of this moment, singing indoors is considered a high-risk activity.<sup>2</sup>
  - Special music for the services will be pre-recorded and played during worship. This may also be viewable via the livestream for those who choose to worship from home.
- Seating/Dismissal
  - Upon arrival, congregants will seat themselves on a first-come basis until capacity is reached, starting at the front of the sanctuary and filling toward the back. If all seats are filled, additional congregants will be asked to return home for worship. Ushers will assist families.
  - At the conclusion of worship, congregants will be dismissed, by row, beginning at the back of the sanctuary.
- RSVP System
  - We will not be taking reservations, but we do encourage congregants to inform the church office if they intend to participate in worship on-site on a weekly basis, either by phone or email. No one will be turned away unless we are at seating capacity. The RSVP system is for information so the staff can plan accordingly.
- Communion
  - Communion will be administered safely using pre-packaged, individual communion elements, which the church already has. Congregants will each pick one up from a table as they walk through the narthex toward the sanctuary.
- Shared Objects

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/covid-19/pam-covid-052120.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/covid-19/pam-covid-052120.pdf);  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02786826.2020.1812502>.

- The offering plate will not be passed in worship. A basket for the offering will be placed in the narthex and congregants will be encouraged to leave their offering in the basket upon entering/exiting the building.
- Given the low risk of spread through surfaces, pew Bibles and hymnals may be used, but should not be shared in any way, except by immediate family members. The time between weekly services is more than enough to mitigate the risk of spread through these surfaces. Hymnals and Bibles will be on chair seats prior to worship and will be left there when congregants depart after worship.
- Bulletins will be available for congregants who prefer them. All texts will be projected using the elevated projectors in the sanctuary.
- Entry/Exit
  - All congregants will enter/exit through the narthex doors. The exterior narthex doors and the double doors into the sanctuary will be propped open and ushers will direct congregants to enter there. Congregants should note the temperature outdoors and plan accordingly, as it may become chilly or warm in the sanctuary during worship. All other doors will be closed until the beginning of worship and will have a sign directing people to the main doors.
  - Congregants will be asked to exit the building immediately after worship, but are not required to immediately leave the church property. Congregants will be welcome to visit with one another outside, while remaining cognizant of mask/social distancing requirements.
- Sunday School
  - Sunday School will remain virtual. Sunday School will begin at 9:15am and end promptly at 10:00am to allow time for congregants to participate in Sunday School at home and make it to the church in time for worship, if they so choose.
- Restrooms
  - Restrooms in the main church building will be open, but only one stall will be considered operational. Congregants are encouraged to use the facilities only on a limited basis. Disinfecting wipes will be provided in the stalls and congregants are encouraged to wipe down all surfaces before each use.

#### IV. Nursery

- The nursery will be open for childcare. Congregants are encouraged to inform the church office in advance if they intend to use the nursery.
- One parent/guardian will be asked to handle drop-off and pick-up to limit the number of people going in and out of the CE building.
- Nursery staff will wear masks, but masks will not be required for small children. Nursery staff will thoroughly clean and sanitize the nursery space and any toys/objects handled by children while under their care.

#### V. Boy Scouts

- The Boy Scouts are currently approved to use outdoor spaces on church property. Once the Session approves use of the church building for in-person worship, the Boy Scouts will also be permitted to use indoor church spaces with appropriate COVID-19 protocols

in place. They will be required to notify the church office if any attendee may have been exposed to or has tested positive for COVID-19.

#### VI. Response to COVID-19 Exposure

- Worship attendees will be expected to advise the church staff immediately upon learning that s/he may have been exposed to the coronavirus or has tested positive.
- If it comes to our attention that a congregant who attended in-person worship may have been exposed to COVID-19 or has tested positive for the virus, we will notify the other attendees of potential exposure through contact tracing.
- To facilitate contact tracing, an usher will take a picture of the whole sanctuary during worship, so we know who needs to be contacted regarding potential exposure.
- Visitors will be encouraged to provide contact information for use in the case of potential exposure.

#### VII. Additional Resources

- Considerations for Communities of Faith, May 23, 2020, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fphp%2Ffaith-based.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fphp%2Ffaith-based.html)
- Phases in Re-Opening Church Buildings in Response to a Public Health Emergency  
Created May 14, 2020, Presbytery of Florida  
<https://www.presbyteryofflorida.com/resources/Reopening+phases.pdf>
- Resuming Care-Filled Worship and Sacramental Life During a Pandemic  
Ecumenical Consultation on Protocols for Worship, Fellowship and Sacraments  
[https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Resuming\\_Care-filled\\_Worship\\_and\\_Sacramental\\_Life.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Resuming_Care-filled_Worship_and_Sacramental_Life.pdf)
- Returning to Public Worship, Presbyterian Church (USA)  
[https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/covid-19/returning\\_to\\_public\\_worship\\_may\\_2020.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/covid-19/returning_to_public_worship_may_2020.pdf)