Safety Plan

**Theological Rationale**

Jesus teaches us to love one another, just as God loves us. In 1 Corinthians 12-13, Paul applies this absolutely central Christian belief to the Church, whom he calls “the body of Christ.” The apostle points to the beauty of the variety of gifts found in the body, noting especially how each part of the body needs the other: “The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I have no need of you’, nor again the head to the feet, ‘I have no need of you’ (12:21).” Paul’s purpose here is to emphasize unity within the Church, and that unity extends even to a physical sym-pathy—a feeling together: “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it” (12:26).

It is this theology of love that has provided the impetus for the discussions and planning of the Corona Response Team (CRT). Every consideration, every design, has been evaluated in light of the integrated nature of the body of Christ, so that the plans will affirm the God-given value of each individual’s welfare. The CRT has feet of clay, meaning that we will surely have to adjust our strategies to accommodate unforeseen circumstances. But the goal along the way has been, and will always be love.

**Coronavirus Team Process**

CRT has been meeting weekly to develop plans for returning to indoor worship on our beautiful campus. CRT members read articles, talked with members of other churches, and discussed in depth when and how to return to worship. The driving focus was always to keep the health and wellbeing of the congregation first and foremost in our work. COVID metrics as outlined by Governor Cooper and local authorities continue to play a major role in determining when we return. Multiple sources of information contributed to discerning how to return.

What is presented below for your approval may differ from what you hear from other churches, but represents a consensus amongst the CRT members as to when and how to resume services at our church. As time goes by, there will be a need for an ongoing effort to improve and edit this plan during this difficult pandemic.

**Text in Blue indicates new alterations to the plan approved by Session in February 2021.**

**Text in Green are alterations approved by Session in October 2020.**

**The Sunday morning schedule**

8:30 Lewis Hall

9:30 Digital Sunday School Hour

10:30 Sanctuary & Live Stream

*The services will be identical.*

**Communal Safety**

* **Face Masks** are required to be worn properly over the nose and mouth for the entire duration of one’s time on campus for all people over 5 years old. In keeping with the Governor’s guidance about school aged children, masks are not required for children under 6 years old. Children ages 3-6, are encouraged to wear masks when seated. If you do not have one, a disposable face mask will be provided. Double masking is encouraged.
* **Temperature checks** will be performed at entrances with a touch-free thermometer. Households will be sent home if one member has a temperature of 100° or higher. No exceptions.
* **Social distancing** of 6’ or more is required at all times and in all places on campus. Social distancing markers will be set out for the temperature check line. Worshipers will be seated in a pre-set socially distanced arrangement.
* **Hand Sanitizer** will be provided at entrances. We encourage attendees to bring their own.
* **No food or drink** will be provided. Please do not bring drinks to sip on during worship as sipping requires temporary removal of face masks.
* **No singing** will take place. All singing will be pre-recorded and shared on a screen. There will still be live instrumental music in the Prelude, Postlude, and Doxology.
* **Contact Tracing** a picture will be taken at the beginning of the service to enable contact tracing should any attendee get sick.

**Join us online!**

* The Sanctuary service will be livestreamed on YouTube and Facebook at 10:30 am. If you tune in late, the full recording will be available Sunday afternoon.
* If you have any COVID symptoms or have had exposure to someone with COVID in the last two weeks, we encourage you to stay home and join us online.
* Unvaccinated older adults and persons with underlying medical conditions are especially encouraged to join us for worship online from the safety of their homes. Please consult CDC guidelines for more information.
* Those who have recently traveled are encouraged to stay at home for two weeks following your return home.
* If observing any of the communal safety measures will be difficult for you, we encourage you to worship with us online at home.

**What to expect on Sunday Morning**

Arriving

* When you arrive on campus, remember to wear your mask as you exit your car.
* Doors open 20 minutes before each service. Lewis Hall opens at 8:20 am. Sanctuary opens at 10:10 am.
* You may enter only through the Porte Cochere door on the parking lot side door of the Sanctuary or Lewis Hall.
* Temperature checks will be performed with a touch-free thermometer. Households will be sent home if one member has a temperature of 100° or higher. No exceptions.

Getting Seated

* Once in the building, all possible doors will be propped open, and an usher will direct your household to a seat.
* The Sanctuary and Lewis Hall can accommodate 28 households maximum with social distancing in each space. The Sanctuary and Lewis Hall can accommodate 28 households maximum with social distancing in each space. The 29th household will be encouraged to join us online. We do not anticipate having to turn people away when we return. If the need arises, we will look into pre-registration for seating.
  + Worshipers may choose their seats within the social distancing seating arrangement.
  + The Nursery will remain closed. Children must stay with their household through the duration of the service and their time on campus.
  + Once seated, please remain in your seat. You may greet your neighbors with a wave.

Worship

* + There will be no bulletins, friendship pads, hymnals, or blue cards.
  + All liturgy will be projected on the main screen in Lewis Hall and on a screen to the left of the pulpit in the Sanctuary.
  + During the announcements, a picture will be taken at the beginning of the service to enable contact tracing should an attendee get sick.
  + To reduce cross-contamination, worship leaders will lead from separate locations.
  + Plastic shields will be placed in front of the Pulpit and Lectern.
  + We invite silent participation in most liturgy with the exception of call and response like “Thanks be to God,” “And also with you,” and The Lord’s Prayer.
  + While much of worship will be live, all music with lyrics will be pre-recorded and projected on the screen. We will follow the lyrics but will not sing along.
    - Each week we will continue having one traditional song, one contemporary song, and the special music will alternate between styles.
  + Offering containers will be near doors for you to place your offering as you exit.
    - While offering containers will be available, we highly encourage you to utilize the automated payment plan to minimize the possible transmission by offering envelopes.

Departure

* Ushers will dismiss your household to exit. They will dismiss back to front.
* As you exit, you may place your offering in a container near the doors.
* Arrows will guide you to the nearest exit. Please do not linger indoors.

**Q&A/Scenarios**

**We have already had both vaccines. Do we still need to wear a mask and follow all these protocols?**

Yes. Because there are so many unknowns about the virus and the vaccines, if you choose to attend in-person worship, please follow all the protocols until they are lifted for everyone.

**Our whole family has had the virus. Do we still need to wear a mask and follow all these protocols?**

Yes. Because there are so many unknowns about the virus and the antibodies, if you choose to attend in-person worship, please follow all the protocols until they are lifted for everyone.

**What if I have a doctor’s permission not to wear a face-covering?** We understand that there are medical reasons for not wearing face coverings, but for the safety of everyone else, if you cannot properly wear a face-covering throughout the entire service and time on campus, we’ll ask that you livestream with us from home until that requirement can be safely lifted.

**What if the thermometer reading is wrong?** We will not be able to admit any household with any temperature reading of 100 or above. Because it’s possible the thermometer could read incorrectly, we ask you to be prepared for that disappointing possibility.

**How Can I Help?**

*In order to return to in-person worship safely, we will need at least 12 volunteers each Sunday. Without adequate volunteers, we will not be able to proceed with this plan.*

Volunteer positions:

* **Greeter** *Stands near campus entrances to welcome, direct traffic, answer questions, requires community safety precautions. Times: 8:20-8:35 and 10:10-10:35.*
* **Temperature Taker** *Takes temperatures at the entrance doors before service. Preferably a medical professional. Times: 8:20-8:35 and 10:10-10:35.*
* **Usher** *Seats people in group zones, counts attendance and requires community safety precautions. Times: 8:20-8:35 and 10:10-10:35.*

**Seating Charts**



