

First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

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Greetings:

Our goal for returning to in-person, indoors worship is Sunday, September 13. It's important to note, however, that worship will look and feel very different. Currently, we are in Phase 1 of our re-opening, which means that the threat of the virus is *high* and certain safety measures must be followed. The guidelines outlined on the next page reveal what joining in-person for Sunday worship consists of, but the main requirements to keep in mind:

- **You must call the church office (983-5519) to reserve a seat for worship**
- **Face masks must be worn (no exceptions) while in the building**
- **Seating and attendance are limited to allow for physical distancing**
- **Children attending Sunday School will be kept in education wing for duration of service**
- **If you are sick or have any underlying health conditions, please stay home**

Please review the complete list of guidelines to know what to expect and how to participate for in-person service safely. These guidelines will be maintained to a degree for all building use and activity besides Sunday worship. The risk involved for in-person worship gatherings, even with precautions, is *considerable* and so we recommend joining virtually until Phase 2 of our re-opening, which means the threat of the virus has been greatly reduced. Health experts have noted that such risk reduction will not take place until immunization, however, which will require some time yet.

This season requires patience and adaptability from all. Even with real "COVID fatigue," everyone has put forth such grace and understanding. We trust that God's Spirit meets us in this "wilderness." Even as returning to "new normal" versions of our faith routines will be jarring, we must always look to the labor of love as modeled by Jesus (Matthew 25:34-40; Philippians 2:1-8).

Sunday worship will continue to be available through the livestream on our website and Facebook each week. Staff will continue offering opportunities for engagement for all ages, with necessary safety measures, so remain connected for further updates. If you need anything, please reach out. Regardless of limitation, we are *together* in Christ Jesus, now and always.

Grace and peace,

Rev. Jeffrey Hubers & The Re-Opening Committee:

Dennis Thompson	Jean Bloomquist	Mark Zielke	Krista Parin
Andy Lawrence	Russ Zick	JoAnn Sprayberry	Angie Winsman
Scott Sternaman	Paula Thompson	Steve Smith	Cathie Schalk
Barb Freridge	Ryan Cheevers	Diana Seaman	Carol Geldhof
Judy Hoffman	Brenton Offenback	Jan Trapani	Alison Achramowicz
Carly Hubers			

What to Expect When Returning to In-Person, Indoors Services

Before you come to Sunday worship:

- You must call 983-5519 to reserve your spot (office hours: M-Th 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.)
 - Reservations can only be made the week prior the service (last call is Thursday's at 3 p.m.)
- If you feel ill, have a fever, cough, or other symptoms, stay home and join through virtual worship.
- Those with underlying at-risk health conditions should remain home and join through virtual worship.

Entering the building for Sunday worship:

- Doors will be unlocked at 10:00 a.m.
 - Children participating in Sunday School must be dropped off at Door #3 (chapel entrance) – volunteers will take them into the chapel for the duration of the service.
 - Everyone else will enter through Door #1 (carport entrance)
- Masks must be worn when entering the building – if you do not have a mask, one will be provided for you – masks must be worn as long as you are inside the building (no exceptions).
 - If you cannot wear a mask for medical reasons, we lovingly ask you to remain home
 - Children 5 years and over must be masked
- Please maintain physical distance (at least 6 feet) between yourself and other parties at all times.
- A line will be formed at the doors; volunteers will check in each party at the sign-in table outside.
- Ushers will lead in each party when ready to the assigned seating, in either the sanctuary or the fellowship hall.
 - Only those sharing the same household may be seated together
- Restroom usage prior, during and after worship is discouraged unless necessary.
 - Children attending Sunday School will be given access to nursery restroom
- Fellowship hour will not take place.

During Sunday worship:

- Ushers will direct each party to assigned seating.
 - Once capacity is reached in the sanctuary, parties will be seated in fellowship hall as overflow seating to watch the service via monitor
- Offering plates will not be passed during worship. Offerings may be placed in the box at the entrance.
- There will be no paper bulletins, hymnals, or pew Bibles available. Info will be displayed on the screen.
- Congregational singing will not take place (music will still happen).
- Pre-packaged communion packets will be available on communion Sundays.
- Children not attending Sunday School must remain with their families during worship.
 - No nursery services will be provided

Exiting the building after Sunday worship:

- Following the postlude, parties will be dismissed by the ushers. Proceed directly outside through Door #1 and into the parking lot.
- Families will need to pick up their children from Sunday School outside Door #3.

These guidelines are not meant to restrict the experience of worship, but to keep the risk of exposure from the virus at bay. These guidelines are how we will practice love of neighbor, especially for the most vulnerable. This is a season, and it *will* change, but we must put off our comfort for the time being in order to preserve and protect God's gift of life in all persons.

If you have any questions, please contact the church office or a member of the Re-Opening Committee.