

# *First Congregational Church*

*United Church of Christ*

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Blessings in the Name of Jesus:

The Re-Opening Committee reviewed current COVID levels in the community, as well as strain on the healthcare system, recommending a couple more weeks of monitoring the virus before resuming in-person services. Church Council has thus decided to return to limited in-person worship on Sunday, January 31, pending no further outbreak spikes.

The next couple weeks will allow the Deacons time to prepare for hosting in-person services again, as well as more of our elderly, vulnerable and healthcare populations to receive vaccinations if available. Parish Nurse Jan has already been contacting members and helping coordinate vaccination schedules. This time also allows us to prepare as a community with the communicating of safety protocols and facility expectations:

- **Face masks must be worn while inside the church building**
- **Room capacities must be followed to allow for physical distancing**
- **All building use should be coordinated through the church office for contact tracing**

The next page has the complete list of expectations for in-person worship. All services will continue to be live-streamed and available on our website or through Facebook. Our church has a Zoom account for any meetings or groups to be held remotely. You can always receive text updates by texting the number **81010** with the message **@fccstj** to be added to the list. All updates and information are sent out via email or hard copies can be requested through the church office.

This has been a *long* season – even with the newness of 2021 and the reality of vaccinations, the road before us remains *considerable*. However, we will get through this. The Holy Spirit abides with us, empowering us for our ministry as disciples; God's love unites our hearts, even distanced, and fills us with the light of *hope*.

Grace and peace and the hope of God With Us,

Rev. Jeffrey Hubers & FCC Church Council

# 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 forget to call, you may come Sunday morning, but will only be seated after all reservations have been accounted for and if space is available
- 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:

- Please enter through Door #1 (carport entrance)
  - 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.
- 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.
- Ushers will lead each party when ready to the assigned seating.
  - 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.
- No paper bulletins, hymnals, or pew Bibles available. Info will be displayed on the screen.
- Congregational singing will not take place at this time (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.