

First Congregational Church

United Church of Christ

2001 Niles Avenue St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Rev. Jeffrey Hubers
Senior Minister
Office (269) 983-5519
FAX (269) 983-5988

Ph. (605) 680-9434
pastorjeffrey@fccstjoseph.org
office@fccstjoseph.org
www.fccstjoseph.org
www.facebook.com/FCCStJoseph

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Blessings in the Name of Jesus:

We've successfully been offering in-person worship services and building activity and are grateful for the patience and understanding. The Re-Opening Committee continues to review levels of the virus in the community and adheres to the wisdom of state and national health experts, passing on their recommendations to Church Council for action. Even with vaccination rollout and lower infection rates, the reality of the pandemic is still ongoing. For now, the recommendation is to continue with our current safety protocols.

Please review the complete list of expectations for in-person worship on the next page, but the key components for all building usage currently are as follows:

- **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**

We've been working hard to make sure our in-person activities are safe, especially our experience of worship. If you forget to call-in or that seems an obstacle to you, please come Sunday morning and we'll find you a place. Our registration system is a means of contact tracing and allotment for safe distancing. The same can be said for our worship format – it's intended to provide a meaningful, but still *safe* experience. If you're more comfortable at home for now, that's okay, too – we will do our best to remain connected and offer support from a distance. We are people of the Spirit, after all.

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.

In this Lenten moment, we are reminded that Jesus walks this road through desolation *with us*. Spring/Easter is coming, but the Cross cannot be avoided. God's love unites our hearts, even distanced, and fills us with the light of *hope*.

Grace and peace,

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 please check in with the sign-in table first in order to receive a spot (overflow seating is always available in fellowship hall)
- 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.
- Fellowship hour will not take place indoors at this time.

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.
- 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.