

## **GUIDELINES FOR RESUMING WORSHIP TOGETHER**

The manner in which we begin to re-engage with public worship services needs to remain in thoughtful alignment with the guidelines provided by national, state, local health officials as well as the Southern Ohio Synod.

### ***GUIDING PRINCIPLES***

The following are some of the factors that should be considered:

- 1) The safety of the our members and the community.
- 2) Our public witness to the community.
- 3) The particular needs and circumstances of St. John's

### ***COMMUNICATION***

- 1) Guidelines and recommendations are being updated continually. It's important for the people of St. John's to be fully informed of the plans and protocols the council adopts via email, website, and phone calls.
- 2) Some will be thrilled to meet again, as soon as possible. Others will feel that a "wait and see" approach is more fitting.
- 3) The guidelines are for the protection of others.

## **TEMPLATE FOR RETURNING**

*In the week before May 31*

- 1) Communicate preparations and expectations via Facebook, website, video, and email
  - a) Masks are encourage for all those entering the building
  - b) No one will be refused entry for not wearing a mask but it is highly encouraged.
  - c) Given my distance from the congregation I will take my mask of when leading worship so the sound is better picked up by the microphone. I will put it back on for communion.
- 2) Stairway to upstairs blocked.
- 3) Stairway to kitchen and fellowship hall blocked. No access.
- 4) We will wipe down pews with disinfectant before each service.
  - a) That means between services too.
  - b) Paper products are very difficult to disinfect. Worship books will be removed from the pew. Music will be found in the bulletins.
- 5) We will continue our Youtube worship experience and are working to return to live streaming. Bulletins are posted on the Chuch web page with links to the Youtube videos.
- 6) Signage of protocols will be posted in the church at the entrances.
- 7) Staggered seating
  - a) Every second Pew will be blocked off to provide distancing.
  - b) There will be marked on the pews for use "zones" for seating and for "not seating". A diagram will be sent out next week
  - c) People from the same household should sit in the same zone as they do not need to be 6 ft apart. They are already with each other at home.

*Each Day of a Service*

- 1) Please each attendee take your temperatures before coming to church. Anyone with a

temperature >99 are asked to stay home.

- 2) Greeters present while standing 6-10 feet from doors
- 3) Prop open all doors as much as weather permits to limit touching door handles
- 4) Ushers maintain distance while guiding people to seats
- 5) Hand sanitizer is available at each door and will be available to each as you come up for communion.

#### *During Services*

- 1) No youth or children's classes (children stay with family) No Nursery available.
- 2) Maintain your distance we will share the peace only verbally.
- 3) We need to observe the latest social distancing protocols in the pews and as we enter and leave
- 4) Band participants will model social distancing and avoid sharing mics, instruments, stands, etc.
- 5) No offering plates will be passed; Stationary open baskets/plates without handles will be at each entrance. Please don't handle the plate.

#### *Communion*

- 1) Anyone who feels uncomfortable in receiving communion for what ever reason should not feel bad with their choice. Personal safety and emotional comfort is very important.
- 2) I will ask each side of the church to come up separately to make it easier to maintain social distancing.
- 3) You obviously will have to remove your mask to receive communion. Replacing it afterward.
- 4) Bread: We will return to using wafers. It is impossible to sanitize bread. Pastor will sanitize his hands before distribution. Please open both hands so the wafer can be dropped into your hands avoiding touching
- 5) Wine: Prefilled individual disposable cups. Cups will be put in every other hole in the trays to minimize risk of touching another cup. Take your own cup it will not be handed to you. Baskets will be at the side isle for depositing used cups.
- 6) If your practice is to kneel at the rail after communion it is asked that you maintain appropriate distancing as you kneel.
- 7) I will take communion to anyone who can not come to the front.
- 8) Setting up Communion:
  - a) People setting up Communion will use hand sanitizer
  - b) They won't touch the wafers but pour them out of the bag on to paten.
  - c) They will Sanitize their hands again before putting cups in trays. We have a "squeeze bottle filler" to fill the cups.

#### *After Service*

- 1) Structured dismissals by ushers (like you would do at a wedding. By rows) allowing people to leave in smaller groups and go outside (emphasizing no congregating in lobby or parking lot) This sounds silly but I think is necessary to avoid "grouping".
- 2) Sanitize all surfaces for the next service. We will need to be mindful of closing the room for the next service until cleaning done.
- 3) Pick up used Communion cups.
- 4) Reset communion for next service.

Sunday School will resume as soon as we can.

## **OUR PROPOSED SCHEDULE :**

- 1) May 31 we will resume in person worshiping in the Sanctuary following the above guidelines.
  - a) Both 8:30 and 10:30 services
  - b) First Saturday evening service June 6 in the chapel.
- 2) Distance is our friend. Virus can “fly” in our exhaled breath. That is why masks are important. Unless you are Singing or coughing 6 ft is enough. If you are singing to the back of someone and have your mask on there is very low risk of transmission.
- 3) Meet and Greet with the primary pastoral candidate is scheduled for June 13.( Saturday Afternoon. 3p- 5p). Please keep your spacing and wear your masks. No handshaking.
- 4) Congregational Meeting to vote on a call for the primary candidate will be Sunday June 14 at 9:30.

We can do this but we need to be mindful of spreading the virus to others.  
This is a new way of being together it's not fun being this way but necessary.