

State Street United Methodist Church
Guidelines For Reopening From Covid-19 Restrictions
Adopted by the Church Council of State Street United Methodist Church
May 17, 2021

1) Formal worship services and other gatherings in facilities of SSUMC will be opened in accordance with the guidelines below:

A) Restrictions on numbers of persons attending religious services or other gatherings are lifted except as may be directed by state or local mandates;

B) We will continue to follow guidelines as established by the CDC from time to time;

C) Individuals in attendance should be made aware that the Bishop's Cabinet of the Holston Conference, relying upon the Wesleyan tenet to Do No Harm, continues to ask persons to wear a mask unless all persons in attendance have been vaccinated;

D) Individuals in attendance should be made aware that the CDC and the President say that fully vaccinated persons are safe to remove face coverings whether inside or outside;

E) Individuals in attendance should be made aware that the Governor of Virginia, through Executive Order Seventh Amended Number Seventy-two, entered May 14, 2021, requires participants in religious services to maintain social distances as previously provided and to wear masks as may be directed by CDC guidelines;

F) SSUMC requests fully vaccinated individuals in attendance to exercise their best judgment with regard to wearing face coverings after duly considering the request of the Bishop's Cabinet and the guidance of the CDC;

G) Persons who are not fully vaccinated should wear face coverings at all times while inside the church building;

H) Congregational singing is permitted;

I) Attendance Cards will be made available in all pews;

J) To ensure our ability to notify all persons of any positive exposure to the Covid virus, registration for services will continue as now practiced, subject to change or termination as deemed appropriate by the senior pastor upon her consideration of current community and local Covid conditions, as well as the reliability of the accuracy and completeness of information submitted on the attendance cards;

K) Collection plates will not be passed, but collection stations will be at the rear of the sanctuary or worship space in visible and prominent locations for persons to deposit their offerings;

L) A recommendation will be made to Finance Committee to provide an on-site means for use of debit or credit cards for financial contributions or payments to the church;

M) Bulletins will be provided and available for pickup by worshipers in visible and prominent locations at the rear of the sanctuary or worship space;

N) Communion should recommence on its usual Sunday, beginning in June, giving due regard for the safety of worshipers;

O) Current sanitizing and cleaning procedures will continue to be followed;

P) Small groups, such as Sunday School classes, should develop their own specific procedures not in conflict with these guidelines;

Q) Procedures for children and youth programming will be left to the persons supervising those programs in consultation with the senior pastor, giving due regard to these and CDC guidelines as well as applicable directives of the Commonwealth of Virginia;

R) A separate task force should be established for the Recovery Program as they have unique circumstances and needs that can be better addressed by persons more intimately involved in their programming;

S) Spring Garden Preschool will be responsible for developing a proposal for their programming;

T) Persons or groups will need to make a written request for use of particular spaces within the church on forms available through the church office to enable the church staff to coordinate cleaning and sanitizing measures;

U) Outside groups will need to submit a written request for use of church premises with a plan for safely gathering for approval by the senior pastor;

V) Any group developing a plan for safely gathering should submit the same to the senior pastor for approval.

2) While not under the assignment of the scope of this Task Force, conversations led to the need for a communication to all church members advising that the church is open and encouraging members to return to participate as they feel comfortable. It was also felt that an opportunity for worshippers to express concerns and request prayer support as they may choose during worship services, and that prayer request cards should state whether the person requesting the prayers prefers their request to be confidential or open for public disclosure.