



COVID-19 ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

The committee has come up with the following 4 step plan to reopening. It will be up to the session to adopt this plan and move forward with it. We recommend doing this in steps as dictated by data trends on COVID-19 new infections/hospitalizations/etc. The committee is carefully monitoring the data and we ask for your trust that we are doing this to the best of our ability and with the best data available. There are many different data points that we are monitoring and we will use our discretion as to what the different pieces of data mean.

We, like all of you, long to be physically together as a church again. However, we feel it is our duty as a medical advisory team to make decisions using real time data that will protect all members of our congregation to the best of our ability. The consequences of making a wrong decision weigh heavily on us and we would rather err on the side of more prudent decisions that protect the health of all. Thus we are still not at a point where we would recommend a specific date for reopening for in person worship.

During this time, these specific points listed below can and will certainly change. We reserve the right to advise that we go back a step if circumstances dictate. We ask that you understand the need for us and for all of you to be fluid and flexible with this plan. Recommendations may change by the day/week depending on new information we obtain. None of us have ever been through a pandemic so we are all learning along the way. We appreciate everyone's care and understanding as we navigate these unknown waters.

If anyone has questions/concerns/comments, please direct them to the church staff and they will funnel them to the advisory committee.

OPTION ONE: (starting here is recommended by the committee)

Continue to remain in step one as below until there is a consistent 2 week decline in new infections in upstate SC; follow steps 1-4 as below

OPTION TWO:

Session can choose to proceed with any of steps at any time as below but would not be at recommendation of the advisory committee.

STEP ONE:

All church activities, including worship, continue virtually. Church staff can use office as needed to continue the work of the church but the office will remain closed for outside visitors. Funerals/weddings in church to be limited to <10 attendees with social distancing observed or funerals with graveside only with social distancing observed. Youth can participate in outdoor activities where social distancing can be easily done.

STEP TWO:

The COVID-19 Advisory Group recommends this only be implemented when there is a 2 week consistent decline in new infections in the upstate SC area

Limited church based activities. Meetings deemed necessary to occur in person can occur with masks/social distancing. In person worship limited to <50 attendees with following restrictions:

- would allow for outdoor worship as feasible
- online signup ahead of time to keep numbers at appropriate capacity
- attendance will be managed by email (those signed up will follow-up that they attended) so that contact tracing can be done, if needed
- consider 2 services if demand indicates with intense cleaning in between
- doors to fellowship hall open so no contact necessary
- hand sanitizer at entrance (to kill germs on hands and prevent contamination of surfaces) -mask/face covering recommended for all over age 2 (to prevent respiratory droplets disseminating) and will have masks next to hand sanitizer for those who don't have one but will advise ahead to bring own
- will have signs posted with symptoms etc. to discourage anyone who is ill not to attend; include recent plane travel/known sick contacts as deterrent to attending
- strongly encourage those with preexisting health conditions and those 65 and older to continue to worship online
- no Sunday school (unless virtual)
- no nursery
- no congregating in entrance area
- no physical hymnals/Bibles
- no paper bulletins handed out
- no attendance pads
- no passing of offering plates (can have designated plate at entrance)
- no in person communion
- no passing of the peace
- no congregational singing
- instrumental music only (exception might be individual singer as determined by Lisa and the committee)
- no congregational participation in group recitations
- end of service will have dismissal by rows/groups
- pastor will exit before congregation and there will be no face to face interaction with staff

Funerals/weddings in church to be limited to <50 attendees with social distancing observed or funerals with graveside only with social distancing observed. Youth can participate in outdoor activities where social distancing can be easily done.

Church staff can use office as needed to continue the work of the church but the office will remain closed for outside visitors.

STEP THREE:

The COVID-19 Advisory Group recommends this only be implemented when there is a 6 week consistent decline in new infections in the upstate SC area

Same as step two with following changes

Funerals/weddings in church to be limited to <50 attendees with social distancing observed or funerals with graveside only with social distancing observed. Youth can gather with small groups of 10 or less and observe social distancing.

Church staff can use office as needed to continue the work of the church but the office will remain closed for outside visitors unless deemed appropriate by church staff. Any visits must be planned ahead and arranged with appropriate staff. Unannounced visitors will not be accepted unless situation is deemed emergent.

Number allowed at worship/weddings/funerals may increase to number that can be accommodated with social distancing still being observed.

STEP FOUR:

The COVID-19 Advisory Group recommends this only be implemented when there is the availability of treatment/vaccine or a severe drop off in cases: gradual return to normal worship practices. How this looks will continue to evolve over the summer.

RESOURCES:

Music:

https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/covid-19/pam-covid-052120.pdf

PCA USA Resources :

<https://www.pcusa.org/covid19/#1>

Health Resources:

<https://www.scdhec.gov/infectious-diseases/viruses/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/south-carolina-coronavirus-cases.html>

Articles of Interest:

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6920e2.htm>

<https://elemental.medium.com/why-singers-might-be-covid-19-super-spreaders-57607ed71b9b>

<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/columnists/iowa-view/2020/05/02/covid-19-why-singing-public-particularly-unwise-now/3065888001/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/2020/05/07/church-reopen-sing-masks-service/>