

The following is a working document that aims to outline a multi-stage approach for Creekwood Christian Church to begin meeting in-person as the COVID-19 pandemic begins to decline and before a vaccine is available. This plan and the stages outlined have been created through a process of research, discernment, and prayer. Primary resources consulted include [CDC Guidelines for Faith Based Organizations](#), [The Wisconsin Council of Churches Guidelines for Returning to Church](#), and the [Christian Church \(Disciples of Christ\) in the Southwest's "Letter to Congregations About Re-Opening."](#) As our leadership and staff have engaged in discussions, spent time in prayer, and considered how we can be as faithful and safe as possible, these guidelines will help us 1) determine the necessary criteria to be met in order to meet in person, 2) what precautionary measures we will take to ensure public safety and faithful practice, and 3) how each of our ministry areas will be impacted by these changes.

RETURNING TO THE CREEKWOOD CAMPUS

Stage 1 of Returning to the Creekwood Campus

Stage 1 may begin when we have seen 14 days of decline in COVID-19 cases and deaths in Denton, Dallas, and Tarrant County—the three primary counties wherein our members reside. Upon reaching 14 days of decline in COVID cases and deaths, we can resume in-person worship meetings with the following safety precautions in place:

- Sanitizing the sanctuary, restroom, high-touch surfaces, doorknobs and handles between all worship services.
- Limiting building access to include only large meeting areas where safe social distancing can be practiced.
- Requiring masks to be worn by all adults and strongly requesting that children currently enrolled in grades K-12 wear masks as well. This expectation does not apply to individuals who have medical or physical conditions that prevent them from masking.
- Practicing vigilant hygiene through frequent handwashing and ample access to hand sanitizer in worship, lavatory, and other public spaces.
- Limiting the size of groups and scale of activities that take place within our building.
- Posting signs and symptoms of COVID-19 at prominent entry points and doorways throughout the building.
- Strongly encouraging our most vulnerable members to worship from home and providing space that is especially distanced for them should they choose to join us for worship in-person.
- We will not provide writing implements.

In order to meet the safety precautions outlined above, the following changes will be made within each of our ministry areas:

- WORSHIP

- No more than 50 persons will be allowed in the sanctuary during worship services.
- Because we are limited worship attendance to no more than 50 persons in the sanctuary, we will be expanding our worship service offerings to include a third worship service. Service times will be 9:00am, 11:00am, and 4:00pm.
- We will re-arrange chairs to make social distancing feel intuitive and inviting, allowing persons who live in the same household to sit together.
- Deacons will assist in ushering individuals into the sanctuary.
- We will continue to livestream worship services via Facebook Live and Vimeo, so that those who wish to continue practicing stringent social distancing are able to worship with us.
- We will set up overflow seating in the Great Room to accommodate persons who may come to attend a given service and exceed capacity.
- The only time individuals will not be masked in the sanctuary is when they are singing, speaking, or preaching from the Chancel.
- Our musical ensembles (e.g. choir, band, and youth praise band) will not practice or perform at full capacity. Smaller ensembles (1-4 individuals) may present musical offerings while practicing social distancing on the Chancel.
- Children's Worship will not meet as a separate service offering. Sanitized and disposable, personal worship-in-a-bags will be available for children to use in their seats. Alternatively, tables will be set up in the narthex for children to gather for some worshipful activities in a space that is open enough to accommodate social distancing guidelines.
- We will switch our communion offering to pre-packaged bread and juice to eliminate person-to-person contact. The presiding elder and minister will hand out communion while gloved and masked as people come forward for intinction. Everyone will be invited to take communion in unison and then hold onto trash to dispose of on their way out the sanctuary door.
- The passing of the peace will not be a portion of service as we have traditionally shared it. We will look for creative ways to acknowledge our communal presence together.
- Offering will be collected in a box in the back of the sanctuary to minimize the contact required for passed trays.
- We will disinfect the sanctuary between every service.
- We will limit the printed materials we provide for services. Some printed bulletins will be provided for those who want them, and we will make a digital copy available weekly for people to access on their phones.
- FAITH DEVELOPMENT
 - Adult Faith Development Classes will suspend meeting in person. Online offerings will continue to be available and broadened.

- Children and Youth classes will not meet in-person during the traditional faith development hour.
- Creative outside and/or online opportunities will be made available for children to interact with each other and deepen their faith.
- Youth groups will meet occasionally at 3:00pm on Sundays, maintaining social distancing guidelines and following all pre-established safety precautions.
- We will continue to develop our digital and social media presence with things like regular devotionals, a blog from the Senior Minister, a podcast, and other easily accessible platforms.
- Youth and children will not attend mission trips or camps.
- **COMMUNITY**
 - Weekly Coffee Hour at 10:10am will be moved from the Great Room to outside of the sanctuary doors. Gloved and masked staff or volunteers will serve coffee to those who would like some in disposable cups.
 - People will be encouraged to practice social distancing while visiting in the parking lot.
 - Monthly, we will have donuts available, prepackaged and served by a gloved and masked volunteer or staff member for people to enjoy in the parking lot or on the grassy knoll by the sanctuary.
 - We will not have any large fellowship dinners or meals prepared in our kitchen or provided on our property.
 - Small Groups may begin meeting in-person again in spaces that will allow them to practice safe social distancing.
 - Elders will be encouraged to check-in on their shepherding groups and pastors will also conduct pastoral care, but hospital visits will be suspended.
 - Weddings, funerals, and special services with 50 or less persons will be permitted, but receptions following or prior will be on a case-by-case basis.
- **CONNECT**
 - Discover Creekwood Dinners will be revised to a more social distancing friendly format.
 - We will invest more time and energy in making ourselves accessible and visible to online visitors who are looking to connect in more meaningful ways.
 - We will suspend giving away physical materials to newcomers, but we will encourage them to give us their information so we can be in contact and share with them about Creekwood.
- **MISSIONS**
 - Financial support of mission partners will continue to the best of our ability as we compare pledged dollars to received dollars to adjust our mission dollars in order to maintain our current budgeted percentage.

- We will continue volunteering with Salvation Army and CCA, following safety guidelines and limiting the number of volunteers required for each of these initiatives.
- We will do our best to publicize access to Blessing Bucket funds and encourage members to contribute dollars to help provide for people who are struggling to meet basic needs.
- **RESOURCES**
 - Further investments will be made to permanently install our livestreaming equipment as a fixture in the sanctuary that does not obstruct or hinder the in-person worship experience for members.
 - Special events and venue rentals will be suspended, with the exception of small wedding and funeral receptions.
 - Staff will limit time in the building to Sunday through Wednesday to help curtail cleaning and sanitizing needs.
 - Staff will be screened weekly for any signs or symptoms of illness to ensure the safety and well-being of all.
 - Volunteers and worshippers will be strongly encouraged to exercise discretion and practice extreme caution and should not come to church if they are feeling sick.
 - Leadership teams will still be encouraged to conduct their meetings and business online.
 - Counters will wear gloves when recording offering weekly.
 - Budget line items will be adjusted to reflect an increased cost in cleaning supplies.

Stage 2 of Returning to the Creekwood Campus

Stage 2 may begin when we have seen 28 days of decline in COVID-19 cases and deaths in Denton, Dallas, and Tarrant County—the three primary counties wherein our members reside. Additionally, there should be no signs of reinfection in this tri-county region. Upon reaching 28 days of decline in COVID cases and deaths, we can resume in-person worship and fellowship meetings with the following safety precautions in place:

- Sanitizing the sanctuary, restroom, high-touch surfaces, doorknobs and handles between all worship services.
- Sanitizing all other spaces used in the building.
- Limiting building access to include only large meeting areas where safe social distancing can be practiced.
- Strongly recommending masks to be worn by all adults and requesting that children currently enrolled in grades K-12 wear masks as well. This expectation does not apply to individuals who have medical or physical conditions that prevent them from masking.

- Practicing vigilant hygiene through frequent handwashing and ample access to hand sanitizer in worship, lavatory, and other public spaces.
- Limiting the size of groups and scale of activities that take place within our building.
- Posting signs and symptoms of COVID-19 at prominent entry points and doorways throughout the building.
- Encouraging our most at-risk members to exercise caution and care in how and where they choose to join us for worship.

In order to meet the safety precautions outlined above, the following changes will be made within each of our ministry areas:

- **WORSHIP**
 - No more than 100 persons will be allowed in the sanctuary during worship services.
 - Because we are limiting worship attendance to no more than 100 persons in the sanctuary, we will continue to offer worship at 9:00am and 11:00am definitively. We will assess the need or desire to continue holding a 4:00pm service.
 - Strict social distancing will no longer be required, but we will arrange chairs to allow for greater distance than typical to be observed.
 - We will continue to livestream worship services via Facebook Live and Vimeo, so that those who wish to continue practicing stringent social distancing are able to worship with us.
 - We will set up overflow seating in the Great Room to accommodate persons who may come to attend a given service and exceed capacity.
 - Staff will continue to mask in the sanctuary unless they are singing, speaking, or preaching from the Chancel.
 - Our band will be able to begin performing at full capacity. Smaller choral ensembles (1-12 individuals) may present musical offerings while practicing social distancing on the Chancel.
 - Children's Worship will meet in the narthex, where children may gather for some worshipful activities in a space that is open enough to accommodate safe distancing.
 - We will continue to provide pre-packaged bread and juice to eliminate person-to-person contact. The presiding elder and minister will hand out communion while gloved and masked as people come forward for intinction. Everyone will be invited to take communion in unison and then hold onto trash to dispose of on their way out the sanctuary door.
 - The passing of the peace will not be a portion of service as we have traditionally shared it. We will look for creative ways to acknowledge our communal presence together.
 - Offering will be collected in a box in the back of the sanctuary to minimize the contact required for passed trays.

- We will disinfect the sanctuary between every service.
- We will limit the printed materials we provide for services. Some printed bulletins will be provided for those who want them, and we will make a digital copy available weekly for people to access on their phones.
- We will not provide writing implements.
- FAITH DEVELOPMENT
 - Adult Faith Development Classes may resume meeting in person. Some online offerings will continue to be available.
 - Children and Youth classes may resume meeting in-person during the traditional faith development hour.
 - Youth groups will meet on Sunday afternoons, following all pre-established safety precautions.
 - We will continue to provide some of the opportunities for engagement created for social media.
 - Involvement in camps and mission trips will be reevaluated for youth and children.
- COMMUNITY
 - Weekly Coffee Hour at 10:10am may resume in the Great Room. Gloved and masked staff or volunteers will serve coffee to those who would like some in disposable cups.
 - People will be encouraged to practice social distancing while eating or drinking.
 - Monthly, we will have donuts available, prepackaged and served by a gloved and masked volunteer or staff member for people to enjoy in the parking lot or on the grassy knoll by the sanctuary.
 - We will not have any large fellowship dinners or meals prepared in our kitchen or provided on our property (fellowship meals are different than meals planned for missional purposes).
 - Small Groups may continue meeting in-person with more lax social distancing restrictions.
 - Elders will be encouraged to check-in on their shepherding groups and pastors will also conduct pastoral care but hospital and nursing home visits will be determined by the guidelines of each facility, respectively.
 - Weddings, funerals, and special services with 100 or less persons will be permitted, but receptions following or prior will be on a case-by-case basis.
- CONNECT
 - Discover Creekwood Dinners may take place again.
 - We will continue to invest more time and energy in making ourselves accessible and visible to online visitors who are looking to connect in more meaningful ways.

- We will consider giving away physical materials to newcomers, and we will encourage them to give us their information so we can be in contact and share with them about Creekwood.
- **MISSIONS**
 - Financial support of mission partners will continue to the best of our ability as we compare pledged dollars to received dollars to adjust our mission dollars in order to maintain our current budgeted percentage.
 - We will continue volunteering with Salvation Army and CCA, following safety guidelines and limiting the number of volunteers required for each of these initiatives.
 - We will do our best to publicize access to Blessing Bucket funds and encourage members to contribute dollars to help provide for people who are struggling to meet basic needs.
- **RESOURCES**
 - Special events and venue rentals will be reevaluated, and we will update our building use policy to reflect changes to cleaning fees and maximum numbers of people allowed in a space.
 - Staff will resume regular office hours.
 - Staff will be screened weekly for any signs or symptoms of illness to ensure the safety and well-being of all.
 - Volunteers and worshippers will be strongly encouraged to exercise discretion and practice extreme caution and should not come to church if they are feeling sick.
 - Leadership teams may begin meeting in person again.
 - Counters will wear gloves when recording offering weekly.
 - Budget line items will be adjusted to reflect an increased cost in cleaning supplies.

Stage 3 of Returning to the Creekwood Campus

Stage 3 may begin when we have seen 42 days of decline in influenza and COVID-19 cases and deaths in Denton, Dallas, and Tarrant County—the three primary counties wherein our members reside. Additionally, there should be no signs of reinfection in this tri-county region. Upon reaching 42 days of decline in COVID cases and deaths, we can resume in-person worship and fellowship meetings with the following safety precautions in place:

- Sanitizing the sanctuary, restroom, high-touch surfaces, doorknobs and handles between all worship services.
- Sanitizing all spaces used in the building.
- Suggesting that masks be worn for activities that require closer interaction or involve food preparation. This expectation does not apply to individuals who have medical or physical conditions that prevent them from masking.

- Practicing vigilant hygiene through frequent handwashing and ample access to hand sanitizer in worship, lavatory, and other public spaces.
- Monitoring the size of groups and scale of activities that take place within our building.
- Posting signs and symptoms of COVID-19 at prominent entry points and doorways throughout the building.
- Encouraging our most at-risk members to exercise caution and care in how and where they choose to join us for worship.

In order to meet the safety precautions outlined above, the following changes will be made within each of our ministry areas:

- **WORSHIP**
 - No more than 150 persons will be allowed in the sanctuary.
 - Because we are limiting worship attendance to no more than 150 persons in the sanctuary, we will continue to offer worship at 9:00am and 11:00am definitively. If we still have a third service meeting, we will assess the need or desire to continue holding a 4:00pm service.
 - Chairs will be arranged to allow for max capacity (including choir loft in the count) while still creating as much space between as possible.
 - We will continue to livestream worship services via Facebook Live and Vimeo.
 - Staff will no longer mask in the sanctuary.
 - Our band will be able to begin performing at full capacity. The full choir may present musical offerings while standing further apart.
 - Children's Worship may meet in their designated children's worship space again.
 - We will continue to provide pre-packaged bread and juice to eliminate person-to-person contact. The presiding elder and minister will hand out communion as people come forward for intinction. Everyone will be invited to take communion in unison and then hold onto trash to dispose of on their way out the sanctuary door.
 - The passing of the peace may expand to include an invitation to shaking hands and hugging again, with a clearly defined reminder that it is okay to refuse physical contact.
 - Offering will be collected in a box in the back of the sanctuary to minimize the contact required for passed trays.
 - Printed materials will be provided again in the sanctuary, but we will not provide writing implements.
- **FAITH DEVELOPMENT**
 - Adult Faith Development Classes will continue meeting in person. Online offerings will be evaluated and reviewed based upon continuing participation.

- Children and Youth classes may resume meeting in-person during the traditional faith development hour.
- Children's Ministry special events and family events may resume their regular schedule.
- Youth groups will meet on Sunday afternoons, following all pre-established safety precautions.
- We will continue to provide some of the opportunities for engagement created for social media.
- Involvement in camps, mission trips, and overnight youth experiences will be allowed.
- COMMUNITY
 - Weekly Coffee Hour at 10:10am may resume in the Great Room. Gloved and masked staff or volunteers will serve coffee to those who would like some in disposable cups. Pre-packaged bags of donuts will be available for individuals to enjoy along with their coffee.
 - People will be encouraged to sit no more than six to a table (unless members of the same household) when eating at church.
 - Large fellowship dinners and brunches may be held again with designated servers who will be gloved and masked.
 - Small Groups may continue meeting in-person with more lax social distancing restrictions.
 - Elders will be encouraged to check-in on their shepherding groups and pastors will also conduct pastoral care but hospital and nursing home visits will be determined by the guidelines of each facility, respectively.
 - Weddings, funerals, and special services with 150 or less persons will be permitted. Receptions will be allowed.
- CONNECT
 - Discover Creekwood Dinners may take place again.
 - We will continue making ourselves accessible and visible to online visitors who are looking to connect in more meaningful ways.
 - We will resume giving away physical materials to newcomers, and we will encourage them to give us their information so we can be in contact and share with them about Creekwood.
- MISSIONS
 - Financial support of mission partners will continue to the best of our ability as we compare pledged dollars to received dollars to adjust our mission dollars in order to maintain our current budgeted percentage.
 - We will continue volunteering with Salvation Army and CCA, encouraging a broader base of volunteers to participate.
 - We will do our best to publicize access to Blessing Bucket funds and encourage members to contribute dollars to help provide for people who are struggling to meet basic needs.
- RESOURCES

- Special events and venue rentals will be reevaluated, and we will update our building use policy to reflect changes to cleaning fees and maximum numbers of people allowed in a space.
- Staff will continue keeping regular office hours.
- Staff will be instructed and trusted to report any signs or symptoms of illness to ensure the safety and well-being of all.
- Volunteers and worshippers will be strongly encouraged to exercise discretion and practice extreme caution and should not come to church if they are feeling sick.
- Leadership teams will meeting in person again.
- Counters will be encouraged to wear gloves when recording offering weekly.
- Budget line items will be adjusted to reflect an increased cost in cleaning supplies.

Stage 4 of Returning to the Creekwood Campus

Stage 4 signals a return to worship and community life where there are no restrictions (other than the fire code) to the number of persons able to gather in our building for worship, fellowship, or community events. Stage 4 will include best practices that have been adopted and adapted along the way to ensure public health and safety, along with the cleanliness of the building. Given how novel COVID-19 is and the fact that scientists and doctors are learning new things about the virus daily, we do not currently know what criteria we would use in guiding our transition into Stage 4. As we gain better information about what expectations we can have about de-escalation from pandemic levels or vaccination of the virus, we will determine how and when to move into Stage 4.

RETURNING TO VIRTUAL WORSHIP IN THE EVENT OF A CASE SURGE

If at any point during any of the three stages listed above, we experience a sustained rise (five or more days) in COVID cases or deaths, we will resume meeting only virtually. Following a period of COVID reinfection or increased cases and/or deaths, we will again begin the process set forth for returning to the Creekwood Campus for worship and fellowship. This means we will start again with Phase 1, paring down and layering back in offerings and opportunities to gather in-person as outlined above.

COMMUNICATING WITH CREEKWOOD LEADERSHIP AND THE WIDER CONGREGATION

The following are the steps we will take to communicate these changes and stages as they are made and enacted among both leadership and the wider congregation.

- The Senior Minister and Moderator will be responsible for monitoring the current status of declining or increasing COVID cases and deaths in Denton, Dallas, and Tarrant Counties.

- Members of staff and the board will be updated via email and text message of the progress we are making towards meeting the next goal for entering a new stage of returning to the Creekwood campus.
- Congregation wide communications will be made in the following formats and across the following platforms.
 - An email, public announcement during worship, social media posts and a video will be circulated to inform the entire congregation about the plan outlined within this document.
 - A PDF of the document will be shared in the Creekwood Enews and via Facebook post.
 - Weekly, the Creekwood Enews will reference which stage of return we are currently in and offer a brief reminder of the precautions we will be taking in that stage.
 - At both building entrances and the sanctuary entrance, we will have signs posted reminding people of the current precautions in place.
- If we have to communicate a return to virtual church only, that will be made in a special email bulletin, video post, and shared to all social media platforms in addition to encouraging staff and members of the board to create a phone tree to inform members of the change immediately.