

Guidelines for Returning to Public Worship

Revised by Session as of 05-20-2021

The following guidelines, in careful coordination with PCUSA guidelines, government authorities, and medical experts are recommended for implementation to resume Sunday in-person worship. Early stage participation is recommended specifically for healthy individuals with no underlying conditions. Encourage vulnerable persons as defined by the CDC to stay home. Recommend returning to in-person worship only when there is a 14-day reduction in the prevalence of COVID-19 as measured by such factors as: the number of new cases in Pinellas and Hillsborough counties, the percentage of positive test results in those counties; and other factors that the Session determines are relevant.

- Hold a contemporary service at 9 a.m. and a traditional service at 11 a.m.
- The number of people allowed in the sanctuary for worship will be limited by physical distancing.
- Have a plan in place for overflow seating in the education building.
- Document all persons present at each service so contact tracing can be done if someone attending tests positive for COVID-19 following the service.
- Continue online livestream worship for a 9 a.m. contemporary and one traditional service at 11 a.m. for those who choose to remain home until the risk is less or there is a vaccine.
- Greeters will open the East and South exterior building doors before services begin and close after services start. Discourage use of other entry doors.
- Ushers will open the sanctuary doors before and after the services to minimize public contact of building surfaces.
- Hand sanitizer stations are located near entrances. Provide signage to promote public use to clean hands before and after services.
- Bulletins will be placed on tables along with hand sanitizer near sanctuary double door entrances. Printable bulletins that can be brought to services will be available online.
- Promote and encourage physical distancing for worshipers via signage, announcements and publications to avoid congregating in the building hallways before and after services.
- No passing of the peace. Handshakes and hugs should be avoided for now.
- No coffee, food or fellowship time.
- No childcare or nursery will be provided. Children are welcome to worship together with their family.
- Face masks or cloth face coverings are optional for those who have had a vaccine but required for those who have not. Disposable face masks will be available to those that request them.
- The Usher team will communicate and guide worshipers to maintain physical distancing when sitting for services in the sanctuary. Two different colored tapes will be placed on the ends of alternating pews in the sanctuary. Each service will use a specific color for seating so no pew will be used twice for seating on any particular Sunday.
- Bibles, hymnals, paper and pencils will be removed from the pews. No attendance forms will need to be completed. Will encourage worshipers to bring their bibles from home.
- The congregation may hum or sing softly while wearing their face masks. Parishioners must keep their face masks on through the entire worship service and until the people have left the building.
- On Communion Sundays, individual pre-packaged kits will be utilized. Instructions for use will scroll on the overhead screen before service. Waste baskets will be available near the sanctuary exits to collect used items following the service.
- Offering plate/boxes will be placed near each of the sanctuary double doors to collect offerings.
- After conclusion of the service, Ushers will assist in directing worshipers to leave the sanctuary and church building maintaining physical distancing.
- Communicate that any congregating should take place outside the church building away from entrances following services, continuing to maintain physical distancing.
- The sanctuary and common touch areas in the building will be sanitized between services.