



Phased Re-Opening and Risk Mitigation Plan

Reimagining
LIFE TOGETHER

Overview

The clergy and staff at Newman UMC want nothing more than to re-open our facility to worship, classes, community events, and to our non-profit partners and renters. However, as much as we want this, we have a moral obligation to do so in a way that mitigates risk and protects the most vulnerable people in our community.

The first general rule of our faith is, “**do no harm.**” As the leaders of Newman UMC we take this seriously and will do everything in our power to ensure that we are not causing harm to others when considering how and when we re-open our facilities. Every decision we make will be done in light of this general rule and in light of the greatest commandments.

“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being,^[a] and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.^[b] ⁴⁰All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.”

Matthew 22: 37-40

This love for God and neighbor is the driving force in all decisions made by Newman UMC leadership. Our challenge now is to uphold these commandments and the general rules of the Methodist faith tradition in new and innovative ways.

Set before us is a challenge to love in creative ways, in ways we have yet to dream of. The following pages of this plan are just the beginning of reimagining our life together. May we all unify our hearts in the common goal to serve and love our neighbors as we rise to meet the challenges ahead.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ryan Scott".

Rev. Ryan Scott

A Phased Re-opening at a Glance

Phase 1:

Stay home. Save lives. This is the phase we have been in during most of the pandemic crisis. Maximum group size of 5 people to perform essential functions. Face masks worn while in the building. Strict handwashing and sterilization procedures in place. Worship is online only. Church office and buildings closed to the general public with the exception of specified essential services.

Phase 2:

Stay home. Save Lives. Maximum group size of 10 people to perform essential functions. Face masks required. Staff and designated volunteers may return to work in the building. strict handwashing and sanitizing procedures in place. Worship is online only. Some essential meetings may resume. Church office and buildings will remain closed to the general public with the exception of specified essential services.

Phase 3:

Maximum group size of 50 people allowed to utilize the building with strict handwashing and sanitizing procedures in place. Face masks required. Staff and designated volunteers may work in the building. Office and building re-opened to the general public. Sunday worship will remain online. The worship team will work to create smaller in-person worship opportunities during the week to supplement the Sunday service online.

Phase 4:

No limit on group sizes. Strict handwashing and sanitizing procedures in place. Masks are encouraged, especially in confined spaces. Staff and designated volunteers may work in the building. Office and buildings will be open to the public. Virtual worship to continue to offer the most vulnerable among us a safe alternative to in-person worship. Worship will resume with added safety and sanitation procedures. No group singing. All other ministries can function at normal capacity.

Essential Services

NUMC is home to many services and partner organizations. The following is a list of essential services that have been given permission to continue to operate while the church facility is largely closed.

These groups are aware of the Church's guidelines and must follow all state and local guidelines / policies. Considerations have been made so that these groups do not overlap in using the facilities.

HIV Alliance

Provides needle exchange, HIV case management, and community harm reduction services. HIV testing and Naloxone trainings have been suspended until further notice per state guidelines.

Red Cross Blood Bank

Operates a twice monthly blood donation center in the church.

12 Step Groups

Three 12-step groups use our facility. Most meetings are fairly small and are able to properly socially distance themselves.

While many 12 step groups are available in online formats, this is not feasible for many who depend on these groups. Unhoused, housing insecure, and impoverished patrons often don't have reliable internet access. Being that 12-step groups are unquestionably a life-saving tool for many we have deemed them essential.

Food Pantry

The Fish food pantry at Newman distributed food twice weekly. Since the pandemic emergency the pantry has been closed. Most of the volunteer's are part of the vulnerable population. Since the closure a small team of volunteers have worked to configure a way to re-open that does not require people in the building except for a few designated volunteers. At this point there is no set date for re-opening.

Phase 1

Details

High Risk Populations: **Stay Home. Save Lives.**

Church Office and Building:

CLOSED. Only designated staff and volunteers may access the building with explicit permission from the pastor to perform essential duties.

Staff / Volunteers:

Work from home. Office manager is permitted to stop in to perform essential duties. (i.e. check phone messages and deposit checks). Custodian is permitted to access the building to clean and sanitize in order to ensure a sanitary facility for essential services in the building. Custodian is limited to working when no one else is using the building.

Volunteers are not permitted to use the building for any purpose without the explicit consent of the pastor. Complete volunteer work at home if possible. Work with the pastor and church council to plan creative ways to continue ministry while following these guidelines.

Staff and volunteers are not permitted in the building if they are ill.

Safety Procedures / Physical Distancing:

Physical Distancing

- Strictly enforced. Minimum 6 feet between people of separate households.
- Stay home. Conduct any church business by email or phone.

Masks

- Masks are required when in the building and interacting with anyone.
- Congregation is encouraged to wear masks when out in the community, especially at grocery stores, pharmacies, and other places where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Handwashing

- Handwashing is required upon entering and exiting the building. Soap and water are the preferred method.
- Wash hands or use hand sanitizer after coming into contact with high-touch surfaces. (i.e. doorknobs, light switches, handrails, elevator buttons)
- Hand Sanitizer is available throughout the buildings. Soap, water and, paper towels are maintained in restrooms to provide adequate handwashing facilities.

Sanitation

- When staff and essential services use the facility, workspaces must be sanitized after each use.
- Sanitizing solution is provided by the church in spaces that are used. This is the only approved sanitation solution to use.
- Sanitation instructions are available in each space with supplies.

Worship

Online worship only.

Worship can be accessed on the churches Facebook page. The service will go live at 10am and will be available to view later on the Facebook page. The service is also uploaded to the church website by Mondays at noon.

In-person worship music production is limited to our music directors (a married couple) who will record hymns and music in the sanctuary to be used in the online service. The sanctuary is otherwise completely closed.

The pastor and their partner will record worship live using the recorded music and other speaking parts from the musicians and members of the church.

Leadership Responsibilities

During this time the Newman UMC Church leadership is continuing to work to fulfill the mission of the church. We are also working to create and assess plans and policies as we move forward through this process.

The leadership will communicate via email, phone, and zoom video conferencing.

During this crisis your leadership is:

- Making decisions following Wesley's three simple rules: Do no harm. Do good. Stay in love with God.
- Assessing ministry needs and capacity
- monitoring the implementation of these guidelines and policies.
- monitoring conference, state, and local guidelines and policies.
- Communicating with the congregation as we move through this process together.

Community Connections and Outreach

Just because we are not meeting in person does not mean that the church is closed. We are still very much open and working to create a better community for all of God's people.

Members, friends, and constituents of NUMC are encouraged to engage in their faith in new and creative ways. During this crisis the pastor and church leadership will

suggest ways in which we can engage in our faith while being safe and following these guidelines and policies.

Other considerations:

- Scouting groups and other community groups are not permitted in the space until phase 3.
- Food Pantry is limited to “no-touch” is provided outdoors until phase 3.
- HIV Alliance is limited to emergency and essential services only. HIV testing and overdose medication training are prohibited until phase 3.
- All mission and outreach activities must meet all CDC, state, and local, guidelines.

Ministry Activities and Events

No in-person events under phases 1 and 2.

All ministry and community events must be held virtually.

Other Ministry Settings

NUMC does not operate any ministries beyond the settings outlined above.

Phase 2

Details

High Risk Populations: **Stay Home. Save Lives.**

Church Office and Building:

CLOSED. Only designated staff and volunteers may work in the building with explicit permission from the pastor to perform essential duties.

Staff / Volunteers:

Designated staff and volunteers are permitted to work in the building.

Staff/volunteers will take precautions by:

- Washing hands frequently especially after coming into contact with high touch surfaces.
- Staying home when ill.
- Keeping distance from others when working.
- wearing masks unless working in an enclosed personal office.
- disinfecting workspaces when finished using the designated disinfectant.

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