



April 15, 2021

Dear Members and Friends of Faith United,

Blessings to you in this Easter season of the 50 Great Days! I am very excited to share with you our plan for re-opening for in-person worship and gatherings. Last week, on Tuesday, April 6th, the Church Board reviewed and discussed the plan and gave their support. It was emphasized at the Board meeting that the plan is subject to change based primarily on three factors:

1. Changes in the pandemic (for example if a major surge of COVID-19 cases occur and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] recommends staying home).
2. Not enough volunteers to assist with essential support (for example, greeters, ushers, cleaners and Audio-Visual help)
3. Issues arise related to our live-streaming system

These three factors (and perhaps others) could lead to pushing the in-person worship and gatherings dates back. While I feel confident that we will be ready to carry out the plan as outlined in this letter, we thank you for your prayers and patience knowing that things can change. In fact, as the pandemic risks decline, we will adjust our protocols and practices based on information from the CDC and other reputable sources.

Schedule for In-Person Worship

- Sunday, April 18 – 11:00 Traditional
 - Attendance limited to pilot group from people who attended Centering services
- Sunday, April 25 – 11:00 Modern - Confirmation Sunday
 - Attendance limited to confirmation students, their families and their mentor
- Sunday, May 2 – 11:00 Modern (please arrive by 10:45)
 - All are welcome to come, no registration required
 - Once social distanced seating in sanctuary is filled, we can seat overflow in Robinson hall where the service can be watched on the large TV
 - Maximum occupancy is still being determined, but we estimate about 80-100 in the sanctuary and 20-25 in Robinson Hall
- Sunday, May 9 – 11:00 Traditional
- Sunday, May 16 – 11:00 Modern
- Sunday, May 23 – 11:00 Traditional
- Sunday, May 30 – 11:00 Modern
- Sunday, June 6 – 8:30 Traditional, 11:00 Modern
- Sundays June 13 – December 26, 8:30 Traditional, 11:00 Modern

What to Expect at In-Person Worship

1. Please come 15 minutes prior to the start of the service to allow extra time for social distancing, protocols and seating
2. You will be greeted and asked to review the standard questions about COVID risks such as: have you had a temperature of 100 degrees F or higher, have you felt sick, have you been around someone confirmed to have COVID in the past two weeks, etc.
3. You will not have your temperature taken at the church. However, we ask that you check your temperature at home before coming
4. You will be asked to sit in one of the open pews and to sit only with members of your household. Every other pew is open for seating that provides 6' of social distance

5. You will find in each pew a QR code. Using your smart phone camera, scan the QR code and it will take you to a webpage with links to the bulletin, electronic giving and a form for your attendance. If you do not have a smart phone, not to worry. The order of worship will be projected on the wall at both the modern and traditional services to avoid the risks from passing out paper bulletins and to be hospitable to persons who do not have or do not wish to use a smart phone
6. The "Offering Box" (the same box we use for commitment cards during fall stewardship series) will be placed in the narthex for those who wish to give on Sunday morning. You may place your gifts/offering in the box on your way in or on your way out. We will recognize the gifts and offerings symbolically during worship
7. All persons age 4 and up are required to wear a mask that covers the mouth and nose throughout worship
8. All persons in attendance are asked to not sing, but are welcomed to hum
9. A soloist and/or worship leaders will sing up front without a mask, but behind a plexiglass barrier and projected through our sound system
10. Both modern and traditional style worship services will be in the sanctuary for the remainder of 2021 as the Family Life Center is has temporary divider walls in place to meet the social distancing needs of Faith Friends Learning Center
11. At this time, we are not providing worship manipulatives for tactile experience during worship. You are welcome to bring your own manipulatives such as a stuffed animal or coloring supplies. All families with children that are in our database will receive an email from Kathy Schmucker on Saturday evening and Sunday morning with a printable coloring page.
12. Nursery will not be provided before June 6. See more information below
13. Sunday school for children and youth will not be provided until September
14. Families are encouraged to worship together with their children of all ages

Schedule for In-Person Gatherings (Small Groups, Meetings, Etc.)

- Now - Small groups are already permitted to meet outside following the same guidelines that were followed last summer and fall and can continue to meet via Zoom
- Sunday, May 16 and continuing
 - Youth Group meet in-person at 6:00pm in the sanctuary or outside
 - Adult Groups may meet inside – coordinate with Kathy Schmucker and must schedule room first
 - Wednesday Wonder Kids may begin meeting outdoors once a month
 - Scouts Ministry – if we have enough rooms available for their needs
 - Ministry Team Meetings – may meet in person if a room is available – schedule through Sharyl. Please consider the readiness of team members to meet in-person when deciding.
- Sunday, June 6
 - Nursery provided (if we have sufficient volunteers ready)
 - Youth Group – meet in sanctuary at 6:00pm
 - Children's Summer Wednesday Night Program – once a month
- June 21-25 – Vacation Bible School
 - Plans are in progress. Program will be primarily video based, but we are looking into offering an in-person component
- July – Camp Read-a-Lot
 - Dates are yet to be determined. Looking at 2 Wednesdays. Most likely an online video experience.
- September – and continuing
 - Sunday school for all ages every Sunday at 9:45
- To Be Determined
 - Other groups not part of Faith United requesting use of the building or grounds for meetings
 - We will determine a date for allowing other outside groups to meet after we have successfully transitioned to in-person worship and gatherings for the church's ministries.

What to Expect at Small Group In-Person Gatherings

1. Masks covering nose and mouth required for ages 4 and up
2. Social distancing will be practiced
3. Temperature will be taken
4. Sign in is required with screening questions about COVID risks

Other Practices and Information

1. The sanctuary will be disinfected with anti-viral mist after each service
2. After a space is used for a gathering, including the sanctuary after worship, surfaces will be disinfected using CDC standard cleaning agents and practices
3. Hand sanitizer will be available in all rooms
4. Room air filters are being considered
5. Trustees is considering a quote for an in-duct anti-viral ionization filter that would increase our safety in the sanctuary and other high volume spaces
6. All worship services will continue to be livestreamed for those who prefer to worship remotely. In fact, we still recommend online worship as the safest way to prevent COVID spread.
7. Centering – A Service of Prayer and Presence has been discontinued. It may be offered again at a later date if there is a strong interest
8. Virtual Lobby via Zoom will continue every Sunday at 9:00 through April 25. Then, in May, Virtual Lobby will be offered once a month at 9:45 on the third Sunday of the month.
9. Zoom meetings – Even after the pandemic is completely over, we intend to continue to offer Zoom as an option for meetings and for ministry engagement. This platform has offered us the ability to include people who are not able to leave home for any reason. It has also made it possible for us to include members who are out of town or have moved away. There is great potential for expanding our Faith footprint through the continued use of Zoom and other online ministry methods.

Please watch for updates as our approach will be adjusted as CDC guidelines change when the pandemic risks become lower, or, if necessary, we learn how to follow safer practices. If you have any questions, please feel free to call or email me.

I am grateful for the many hours of research, prayer and discussion that went into this plan. Thanks goes to the New Beginnings Team, our staff, ministry team leaders and the Church Board. I also want to thank all of you. You have demonstrated tremendous faith, patience, trust and support throughout this pandemic. I am so looking forward to getting to see you in person again!

Sincerely,



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