



**IMMANUEL**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
*transforming tradition*

May 20, 2021

Dear Members and Friends,

Thank you to all who participated in the recent congregational survey on returning to church and/or last Sunday's sharing of the results at the congregational meeting. Your responses provide helpful information as we make decisions about how and when in-person worship services will resume. We are grateful to the Covid-19 Advisory Team for resourcing this process.

**At its meeting Tuesday evening, the Session adopted guidelines allowing a soft reopening for in-person worship on Sunday, June 6.** The action had unanimous support, and included the newly-elected elders in the discussion.

What is a "soft" reopening? These are the procedures that will guide a **gradual**, "soft" reopening of the church building for worship. They take into account a range of readiness and preferences, and will be adjusted as circumstances change.

Live stream and recorded options for worship and a virtual coffee hour at 11:15 will continue to be offered. This pandemic-driven adaptation has become an important means of worship participation.

**Procedures as we begin the process of reopening**

Worshippers must pre-register online or via the church office *no earlier* than Tuesday and *no later* than Friday for each coming Sunday, providing information for contact tracing, should that become necessary. **Registration for June 6 will begin on Tuesday, June 1.** Watch for details.

The capacity for seating in the Sanctuary is 80 units (1-4 persons), socially distanced. Pews will be marked. If registrations exceed 80 units, names will be placed on a waiting list and contacted by phone or text by Saturday at 5:00 p.m.

In the spirit of loving our neighbor as ourselves, vaccinations for those who are eligible are strongly encouraged for gathering in the Sanctuary.

Masks must be worn inside at all times and will be provided, if necessary.

Hand sanitizer will be readily available.

As weather allows, doors at the front and back of the Sanctuary will be opened to facilitate air flow. (There are no windows that can be opened in the Sanctuary.)

Worshippers must arrive by 9:45 for check-in and seating by an usher. Bulletins will be provided on the Narthex tables (“low touch”).

Worshippers will be dismissed by the ushers at the end of the service to maintain social distancing.

For the time being, there will be no coffee hour in the Parlor.

Building access is limited to the Sanctuary, the Great Hall, and the rest rooms adjacent to the first floor coatroom. Access is available to the Columbarium on the lower level via the elevator.

Nursery care will resume at a later time.

Greet one another with a hand over your heart or an elbow bump rather than a handshake or hug, respecting the boundaries of social spacing and personal comfort levels.

### **Worship practices**

Spoken responses by the congregation will be lessened and there will be no congregational singing at this time. Hymns will be offered for the silent reading of texts as the organ or piano is played (perhaps reduced to two hymns per service).

An offertory will be played; however, offering plates will be on the Narthex tables to receive envelopes as worshippers enter and exit.

### **Children and youth**

Church school is on sabbatical during the summer months, and we anticipate a reopening of The Peaceable Kingdom in the fall, mindful that vaccines are not yet available for children under 12. The Covid-19 Advisory Team is a partner in the design of a safe mission experience for the youth group in June and Vacation Bible School in August.

We believe that we can offer a reasonably safe environment for worship if we observe these practices and we are *overjoyed* at the prospect of gathering again in person as a worshipping community. This congregation’s demonstrated respectfulness of differing opinions and our process of decision making has been and will continue to be a key factor in how we go forward. Let’s live into and “learn into” this together and make it work. With thanks to God!!!

Faithfully,



Deborah A. Block, moderator

On behalf of the Immanuel Session

Robert W. Ater, Teresa A. Larson, Susan J. Stoll, Associate Pastors

Sue Rennane, Clerk of Session

Matt Carlton, Janet Christiaansen, David Crum, Leslie Davis, Nancy Debbink, Kristi Leswing,

Kate Lewis, Laurie Michalak, Allyson Nemec, Sharon Rose, Jim Schleif, Jeff Stearns;

*Elders-elect* Margaret Crowley, Mike Gillard, Tom Scott, Leslie Smart