



First United Methodist Church

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RESPONSIBLE REOPENING POLICY

In March of 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, First United Methodist Church of Newton followed CDC guidelines and Governor Murphy's executive orders by closing its building to all in-person gatherings, with the exceptions of essential church and Head Start Staff (managed independently by Head Start). It has since opened for a period of in-person services from September through November 2021; otherwise, the services have exclusively premiered on YouTube.

Resolved to continue following our Bishop's reopening requirements, which have included and will continue to include following the CDC Guidelines and Governor Murphy's executive orders, First United Methodist Church put into place the following reopening phases and guidelines. These guidelines will be updated in order to remain in compliance with CDC and state requirements.

TREASURES OF HOPE:

Treasures of Hope can reopen, effective July 1, 2020. The following will be the policy in place to ensure health and safety measures. A maximum of two people will be operating the ministry at any given time. Only 6 people will be allowed in at a time. All people must wear masks. Both outside doors will be opened to promote air flow. At the end of each day that Treasures of Hope is opened, the responsible person/people will sanitize both Treasures of Hope rooms with a UV lamp. Changes to this policy for Treasures of Hope must be approved by the Administrative Council.

WORSHIP AND OTHER USES OF THE BUILDING:

PHASE I:

Gathering Size

- We will follow our governor's directives on how many people can gather indoors.

Worship Services:

- We will have one combined worship service at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary. There will be singing of hymns allowed; however, there still will be no choir.

Worship Leaders and Participants:

- Pastor
- Liturgists
- Music Director
- Joy Fellowship Praise Team Director
- A/V Team
- Greeters/Ushers

Social Distance and Masks:

- We will maintain social distancing between pews, meaning that we will be blocking off one row in between pews where people are allowed to sit.
- All congregants are required to wear masks at all times, including when singing hymns. Liturgical/musical participants are required to wear masks except when speaking/performing.
- Office staff, including the pastor, are required to wear a mask when outside the church administrative office wing, or when visitors are in the office wing area.

For clarity, the administrative office wing includes the offices, the choir room, and the hallway that connects those rooms.

Human Contact

- Only the front doors will be unlocked during Sunday worship.
- We will make sure the front door and sanctuary doors are left open so that no one need touch them.
- There will be no fellowship hour, and Holland Hall will only be used as overflow so long as we are not over and beyond the maximum number of people our governor is allowing.
- Most meetings will be held on ZOOM, though in-person leadership meetings can be held if need be.
- There will be no in-person Children's Sunday School Class
 - *Note: There is no Sunday School (including Kids Rock on YouTube) during the summer.*
- There will be no choir.
- There will be no "passing of the peace" during worship.

Cleaning

- We will hiring a cleaning service to clean all areas of church usage.

Vulnerable People

- We will stream our combined service live online for those who cannot worship with us in person.

Protection

- All people will be required to wear masks inside our building at all times, with exception of those directly leading worship during the time they are leading it.
- Sanitizer stations will be strategically placed.

Signage and Teams

- We will place parking signs strategically to inform people to park every other car, and we will have signs strategically posted inside the church to remind people to use hand sanitizer stations and not touch anything.
- We will have greeters/ushers guiding people and reminding them of our policies as need be.

Communication

- We will send out emails with continual updates in our plan. Such updates will also be posted on our website and Facebook page. At publication time, the latest information will also be placed in our monthly Newsletter.

PHASE II:

Gathering Size

- We will follow our governor’s directives on how many people can gather indoors.

Worship Services:

- We will have two worship services. The first is our Joy Fellowship Service at 9:00 a.m in Holland Hall, and the second our Main Service at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary. There will be singing of hymns allowed and the chancel choir will be permitted to sing.
- Masks will be optional, unless otherwise directed by our Governor.

Worship Leaders and Participants:

- Pastor
- Liturgists
- Music Director
- Joy Fellowship Praise Team Director
- JoY Fellowship Praise Band
- Choir
- A/V Team
- Greeters/Ushers

Social Distance and Masks:

- We will maintain social distancing between pews, meaning that we will be blocking off one row in between pews where people are allowed to sit.
- All congregants are required to wear masks at all times, including when singing hymns. Liturgical/musical participants are required to wear masks except when speaking/performing.
- Office staff, including the pastor, are required to wear a mask when outside the church administrative office wing, or when visitors are in the office wing area.
For clarity, the administrative office wing includes the offices, the choir room, and the hallway that connects those rooms.

Human Contact

- Only the front doors will be unlocked during Sunday worship.
- We will make sure the front door and sanctuary doors are left open so that no one need touch them.
- There will be no in-person fellowship hour.
- Meetings can resume in-person, if so desired.
- There will be In-Person Children’s Sunday School Class
 - *Note: There is no Sunday School (including Kids Rock on YouTube) during the summer.*
- There will be no “passing of the peace” during worship.

Cleaning

- We have a hired cleaning service that cleans.

Vulnerable People

- We will stream our combined service live online for those who cannot worship with us in person.

Protection

- Masks are optional, unless otherwise guided by our Governor.
- Sanitizer stations will be strategically placed.

Signage Teams

- We will have signs strategically posted inside the church to remind people to use hand sanitizer stations and not touch anything.
- We will have greeters/ushers guiding people and reminding them of our policies as need be.

Communication

- We will send out emails with continual updates in our plan when necessary. Such updates will also be posted on our website and Facebook page. At publication time, the latest information will also be placed in our monthly Newsletter.

PHASE III:

Gathering Size

- We will follow our governor's directives on how many people can gather indoors.

Worship Services:

- Two Sunday Worship Services at 9 a.m. (JOY Fellowship) and 10:30 a.m. (Traditional).
 - At the JOY Fellowship Service, regular foods and refreshments can be served, both during/following JOY Fellowship and during fellowship hour following 10:30 a.m. worship.

Worship Leaders and Participants:

- Pastor
- Liturgists
- Music Director
- Joy Fellowship Praise Team Director
- Joy Fellowship Praise Team
- Choir
- A/V Team
- Greeters/Ushers

Social Distance and Masks:

- Office, staff and congregants are not required to wear masks or social distance except when law requires it.

Human Contact

- We will continue to follow CDC guidelines, if any, otherwise there will be no restrictions. Fellowship Hour will resume.

Cleaning

- We have hired a cleaning service.

Vulnerable People

- We will stream our combined service live online for those who cannot worship with us in person.

Protection

- Sanitizer stations will be strategically placed.

Teams

We will have greeters/ushers guiding people and reminding them of our policies as need be.

Communication

- We will send out emails (letters to those we know do not use email) with continual updates in our plan. Such updates will also be posted on our website and Facebook page. At publication time, the latest information will also be placed in our monthly Newsletter.

This policy was approved and adopted by the Administrative Council at the 6 p.m. meeting on June 1, 2021, and has since been revised.