

# UMC of Red Bank Safety Policy Regarding Church Sponsored Indoor Small Group Meetings During COVID-19

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## 1 Introduction

As the COVID-19 pandemic is brought under control through introduction of safety protocols and population immunity, the United Methodist Church of Red Bank (UMCRB) is developing a Post-COVID-19 Property Reopening Plan. As part of this plan, every effort is being made to be compatible with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention requirements, the State of New Jersey requirements, and to keep as a goal the Greater New Jersey Annual Conference goal to, “Spread the Good News of Jesus Christ as together we flatten COVID-19 and ensure zero infections are spread by United Methodist Activity.”

### **1.1 Purpose**

This document establishes the UMCRB safety policy regarding Church sponsored indoor small groups during COVID-19.

### **1.2 Team Members Responsible for this Policy**

The Building Use Safety Committee is responsible for the development and maintenance of this policy.

### **1.3 Team Members Responsible for Adherence to this Policy**

The UMCRB Senior Pastor and small group leaders are responsible for ensuring these policies are followed during indoor small group meetings.

### **1.4 Who This Policy Applies To**

This policy applies to all people who attend church sponsored indoor small group meetings at UMCRB.

### **1.5 Definitions**

“Attendees” refer to all people attending church sponsored indoor small group meetings including leaders and participants.

### **1.6 For More Information**

For more information regarding this policy contact the UMCRB Senior Pastor.

### **1.7 Sources of Information**

The following sources were referenced when developing this policy:

New Jersey COVID Information Hub: Are People Allowed to Gather in Person

<https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/reopening-guidance-and-restrictions/are-people-allowed-to-gather-in-person>

UMCRB Building Safety Plan for Outdoor Gatherings Issue 1

UMCRB Building Safety Plan for Staff Issue 1

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1eo4G8gStncppZhpHVvrt9Q2\\_ctANo6ks](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1eo4G8gStncppZhpHVvrt9Q2_ctANo6ks)

## 2 Safety Requirements for Indoor Small Group Meetings

The following specifies church sponsored, indoor small group meeting requirements during COVID-19.

- a. Gathering size shall be in accordance with New Jersey State Guidelines as outlined at the New Jersey COVID Information Hub. At time of issue the following applies: *indoor gatherings must be limited to 25 people or 25% of a room's capacity -- whichever number is lower. All attendees at indoor gatherings must wear face coverings and stay six feet apart.*
- b. A schedule of rooms that may be used, times they are available, and the associated maximum persons per room shall be established and used when scheduling meetings.
- c. Masks shall be worn at all times by all attendees while in the church parking lot and while in the church building.
- d. All attendees shall stay 6 feet apart from other people while in the church building.
- e. Hand sanitizer stations shall be placed at the church building entry area and attendees shall be encouraged to use it upon arrival.
- f. In the event multiple groups are scheduled to meet at the same time, every effort should be made to stagger arrival times in order to avoid lines during sign in.
- g. Upon arrival all attendees shall:
  - a. Enter through the brown door
  - b. Perform a Health Assessment
  - c. Sign in indicating their successful completion of the health assessment

Note 1: Group Leaders or a designee shall arrive early in order to meet each attendee at the door to ensure they perform the health assessment, sign in, and proceed directly to their scheduled meeting room.

Note 2: At Wednesday night Youth Group meetings, the Director of Youth Ministries or designee shall meet all attendees at the door to ensure health assessments and sign ins are completed and that attendees proceed directly to their scheduled meeting room. Parents should remain in their cars, but available in the parking lot, until their child has successfully completed the health assessment.

- h. Rooms shall be designated for small group meeting use. After signing in, attendees shall proceed directly to the room where their meeting is being held.
- i. Seats shall be set up and sanitized before attendees arrive, and sanitized again after use.
- j. Seats shall be set up 6 feet apart and shall not be re-arranged by attendees.
- k. Attendance must be taken by the small group leader at each meeting in the event contact tracing is needed. Appendix B contains a template that can be used for this purpose or the attendees may be captured in meeting notes.
- l. Printed materials shall not be handed out or passed around during small group meetings.
- m. In the event crafting of any sort will be done during a small group meeting, each attendee shall receive their own box of craft materials. Under no circumstance should crafting materials be shared.
- n. No food or beverages\* may be consumed during small group meetings. (\*Note: Water is permitted but attendees must bring their own.)
- o. The kitchen shall remain closed at all times during small group meeting times.

- p. When possible, meeting attendees, should use restroom facilities at home and limit restroom use at the church. If restroom use is required while at the church, attendees, other than youth group attendees, should limit their use to one of the three restrooms immediately across from the first-floor lounge. Other restrooms throughout the building shall not be used by small group attendees. Restroom usage for youth group attendees shall be established based on spaces used and nearest restrooms
- q. Restrooms shall be sanitized after each scheduled small group meeting.
- r. Meeting times should be limited to 1 hour.
- s. When meetings end, all attendees shall leave their meeting room maintaining 6 feet social distancing. When meetings are scheduled in the education wing of the church, attendees shall proceed immediately to the white door and exit the church building. When meetings are scheduled in any part of the building other than the education wing, attendees shall proceed immediately to the brown door, exit the church building and proceed directly to their cars.

Note 1: The Director of Youth Ministries along with Youth Group Leaders shall develop a protocol for youth group dismissal to ensure attendees are dismissed directly to their parents waiting outside the building.

## **3 Communication Plan**

The information specified in this policy shall be communicated in the following ways:

### ***3.1 Communication to Small Group Leaders***

All small group leaders shall receive a copy of this policy.

### ***3.1 Communication to Small Group Attendees***

A user-friendly communication regarding this policy shall be prepared. Information regarding populations particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 shall be included in this communication. A sample of this communication can be found in Appendix A. When possible, this communication should be sent to small group members in advance of their first small group meeting either via email or US Postal service.

Upon arrival at the meeting, small group leaders shall greet attendees at the door to ensure they perform the health assessment and sign in. Prior to starting the meeting, the small group leaders should read the user-friendly communication to attendees as a regular reminder of our small group policies.

### ***3.2 Communication to Church Members at Large***

A user-friendly communication regarding this policy shall be prepared and included in the weekly e-blast. Information regarding populations particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 shall be included in this communication. A sample of this communication can be found in Appendix A.

**Issue Number: 1.0**

**Approved By: Church Council**

**Approval Date: 9/28/2020**

**APPENDIX A**  
**COMMUNICATION TEMPLATE**  
**FOR**  
**INDOOR SMALL GROUP MEETING ATTENDEES**

The following information may be used as a template for communicating to indoor small group attendees prior to arrival.

*During our upcoming small group meeting, the health of all attendees is of primary importance. For this reason, safety requirements have been established for our time together.*

**Things to Know Prior to Leaving Home:**

***Vulnerable People:*** *In keeping with guidance from the Greater New Jersey Conference, we remind everyone to be aware that some people are at increased risk for COVID-19. For more information on whether you may be at increased risk please review the information found here:*

*[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fneed-extra-precautions%2Fpeople-at-increased-risk.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fneed-extra-precautions%2Fpeople-at-increased-risk.html)*

***IF YOU ARE SICK STAY HOME:*** *When you arrive at church you will be asked to perform the following health assessment:*

**ADD LINK**

*If you cannot successfully complete the assessment, do not attend your small group meeting at this time.*

***Follow Established Safety Requirements:*** *Taking care of ourselves and each other is an important part of being the church. To this end, it is imperative that all safety requirements are followed during our time together. Please follow all established safety requirements and proceed directly to and from your meeting space. Do not enter parts of the building that are not related to your meeting.*

***Food and Beverages:*** *No food or beverages\* may be consumed during gatherings so please do not bring them. (\*Note: Water is permitted but please minimize time without mask when drinking. If you plan to drink water, please bring your own.)*

***Church Kitchen:*** *The Church Kitchen is currently closed. If needed, please bring your own water, in your own drinking container.*

**Restrooms:** In order to minimize restroom use, and thus reduce sanitation requirements, we ask that you use the restroom prior to leaving home and when possible avoid using restrooms while at church.

**What to Expect Upon Arrival at the Church:**

**Mask Wearing:** Masks must be worn at all times after arriving at church including while in the parking lot and in the church building. (please bring your own)

**Social Distancing:** A Social Distance of 6 feet or more must be maintained at all times between yourself and anyone that is not a part of your household even while in the parking lot.

**What to Expect When Entering the Church Building:**

**Where to Enter the Church Building:** All small group attendees must enter the church building through the brown door.

**Hand Sanitizing:** A hand sanitizing station will be set up at the entry area. We strongly encourage its use upon entering the church building.

**Health Assessment:** Upon entering the building, each person will be required to perform a health assessment. If you cannot successfully complete the Health Assessment you cannot attend the small group meeting.

**Signing In:** After successfully completing the health assessment each attendee must sign in indicating a successful health assessment.

**Proceeding to your Meeting Room:** After signing in, all small group attendees must proceed directly to their small group meeting room. Do not linger in the hallways or tour around the building for any reason.

**What to Expect During Your Small Group Meeting:**

**Seating:** Sanitized chairs will be set up 6 feet apart in your meeting room. Please do not rearrange the chairs.

**A Reminder About our COVID Safety Policies:** At the beginning of each meeting, the group leader is expected to provide a brief overview of our COVID safety policies.

**Handouts etc.:** There will be no handouts or sharing of materials during the small group meetings.

**Craft Materials:** *If your small group meeting includes any sort of craft material you will be given your own set of materials to use. Under no circumstance should craft materials be shared.*

**Meeting Length:** *Meetings must not be more than one hour.*

**What to Expect When Leaving your Small Group Meeting:**

**Exiting Your Meeting Room:** *Upon exiting your meeting room all attendees should proceed directly to the exit. Social Distancing must be maintained at all times.*

**Where to Exit the Church Building:** *If your meeting is held in the education wing of the building, you must exit through the white door. If your meeting is held in any other part of the building you must exit through the brown door.*

**Proceeding to Your Car:** *Masks must be worn while proceeding to your car and conversations in the parking lot should be kept to a minimum.*

## APPENDIX B

### ATTENDANCE SHEET FOR SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

In the event contract tracing at our church becomes necessary, small group leaders are required to take attendance at each in-person meeting. The following information should be recorded for each attendee. The information may be left for Sheila Leavitt in the outdoor or indoor office drop box before leaving the church building.

Meeting Name:

Meeting Date & Time:

Small Group Leader:

	<i>Attendee First Name</i>	<i>Attendee Last Name</i>	<i>Phone Number</i>
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