

UMC of Red Bank

Safety Policy Regarding Indoor Small Group Worship During COVID-19

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 conform to 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 repeatable indoor small group worship during COVID-19. This policy does not cover special events like weddings and funerals.

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, Director of Music, and Worship Committee Members are responsible for ensuring these policies are followed during indoor small group worship.

1.4 Definitions

Masks are recommended as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the mask over the nose and mouth coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. The CDC recommends all people 2 years of age and older wear a mask in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household.

1.5 Who This Policy Applies To

This policy applies to all church staff, church members, or visitors who attend indoor small group worship services at UMCRB.

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 Safety Policy Regarding Indoor Small Group Meetings Issue 1

<https://www.umcredbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UMCRB-Policy-Regarding-Indoor-Small-Groups-during-COVID-19-Issue-1.pdf>

2 Safety Policy

The following specifies indoor small group worship requirements.

- 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:
 - a. Indoor gatherings must be limited to 25 people or 25% of a room's capacity -- whichever number is lower.
 - b. All attendees at indoor gatherings, over the age of two, must wear face masks at all times*. (*Note: If an attendee is struggling to breathe through their mask, they should remove it and immediately move to an exit and seek medical assistance, if needed.)
 - c. All attendees shall stay six feet apart from individuals from other households.
- b) Worship will be held in the Sanctuary or Fellowship Hall. Worship times will be included in a building use schedule to ensure appropriate cleaning, staffing and other scheduling concerns are considered.
- c) Ushers shall be available at each service to direct participant flow during entry/exit and to take attendance.
- d) Face masks shall be worn at all times by all attendees and worship leaders while in the church parking lot and while in the church building. Any type of communion observance that requires the removal of face masks shall require special approval by Church Council.
- e) Upon arrival all attendees shall:
 - a. Enter through the brown door on the right side of the back porch
 - b. Perform a Health Assessment
 - c. Sign in indicating their successful completion of the health assessment

Note: An Usher or Greeter 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 the worship space.
- f) Seating shall be set up, marked for various household sizes at appropriate distance from one another, and sanitized before attendees arrive. Worship space and seating will be sanitized again after use.
- g) Attendees will sit within the designated areas in the Sanctuary, or in the seats provided in the Fellowship Hall. Seating shall not be re-arranged by attendees.
- h) Hand sanitizer stations shall be placed at the church building entry area and attendees shall be encouraged to use it upon arrival.
- i) Attendance must be taken by an usher or greeter at each worship service in the event contact tracing is needed. Appendix B contains a template that can be used for this purpose.
- j) Printed materials shall not be handed out or passed around during the service.
- k) No food or beverages* may be consumed during worship. (*Note: Water is permitted but attendees must bring their own.)
- l) The kitchen shall remain closed at all times.
- m) When possible, worship attendees should use restroom facilities at home and limit restroom use at the church. If restroom use is required while at the church, 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 worship attendees.
- n) Restrooms shall be sanitized after each scheduled worship service.
- o) Worship services should be limited to 1 hour.

- p) When worship ends, all attendees shall leave the worship space, maintaining appropriate social distancing. Attendees shall proceed immediately to the brown door at the rear of the church, exit the building and proceed directly to their cars.
- q) There shall be no congregational singing. One musician is permitted to sing at a time and must be situated 15 feet from any other person in attendance, and wear a face mask at all times.
- r) Microphones shall not be shared by anyone in attendance, and shall be disinfected after use.
- s) In order to prepare and sanitize the worship space, all attendees will be required to register their anticipated attendance through the church office. Registration will max out at 25 attendees. A confirmation will follow. In order to accommodate all who want to attend, registration will be approved on a rotation.

3 Communication Plan

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

3.1 Communication to Church Staff and Worship Committee

The Senior Pastor, Director of Music and Worship Committee shall receive a copy of this policy.

3.2 Communication to Worship 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 worship attendees in advance either via email or US Postal service.

Upon arrival at the worship service, a designated person shall greet attendees at the door to ensure they perform the health assessment and sign in. Prior to starting the service, the worship leader will read the user-friendly communication to attendees as a regular reminder of our small group worship policies.

3.3 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: 11/23/2020

APPENDIX A
COMMUNICATION TEMPLATE
FOR
INDOOR SMALL GROUP WORSHIP ATTENDEES

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

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

Pre-Registration to attend in person small group worship is required

*In order to prepare and sanitize the worship space, you will be required to register your anticipated attendance through the church office. **Registration will max out at 25 attendees. A confirmation will follow.** In order to accommodate all who want to attend, registration will be approved on a rotation.*

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

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

https://www.umcredbank.org/hp_wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UMCRB-Sign-In-Process-Issue-4.0.pdf

If you cannot successfully complete the assessment, do not attend the worship service 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 the worship space. Do not enter parts of the building that are not related to worship.*

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.

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 by everyone over the age of two at all times* after arriving at church including while in the parking lot and in the church building. (please bring your own) (*Note: If an attendee is struggling to breathe through their mask, they should remove it and immediately move to an exit and seek medical assistance, if needed.)

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 worship attendees must enter the church building through the brown door on the right side of the back porch.

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 worship service.

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

Proceeding to the Worship Space: After signing in, all worship attendees must proceed directly to the appropriate worship space. Do not linger in the hallways or tour around the building for any reason.

What to Expect During the Worship Service:

Seating: Sanitized chairs will be set up or pews will be marked for various household sizes at appropriate distance from one another in the worship space. Please do not rearrange the chairs or sit outside the designated pew areas.

Finding YOUR Seat: Ushers will establish a directional flow to and from the seating areas. Please follow their guidance and sit where designated.

A Reminder About our COVID Safety Policies: At the beginning of each service, the worship leader will provide a brief overview of our COVID safety policies.

Handouts etc.: There will be no bulletins or sharing of materials during the worship service. A bulletin link will be shared in the weekly e-blast and may be printed at home prior to arrival OR may be accessed via a smart phone during worship.

Congregational Singing: To minimize the possible spread of aerosols, we will not have congregational singing during our worship time. One musician may sing at a time but will be situated a long distance away from worshipers and will remain masked.

Worship Service Length: Worship must not be more than one hour.

What to Expect When Leaving the Worship Space:

Leaving YOUR Seat: Ushers will establish a directional flow to and from the seating areas. Please follow their guidance and exit as directed.

Exiting the Worship Space: Upon exiting the worship space, all attendees should proceed directly to the brown doors at the rear of the church to exit. Social Distancing must be maintained at all times.

Proceeding to Your Car: Face 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 WORSHIP

In the event contract tracing at our church becomes necessary, ushers are required to take attendance at worship. 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 service.

Worship Service Date & Time:

Worship Leaders:

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