

Reopening Plan for In-Person Worship

Beginning September 20, 2020

Our Mandate:

Romans 12:10-13

Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. Never be lazy but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble and keep on praying. When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

The safety and health of our congregation is our greatest priority. The following plan meets all requirements of the Technical Assistance Manual as provided by the Virginia Conference (TAM Revised July 8, 2020). At present, we are in Stage 2 of the UMC reopening plan. In addition to the Virginia Conference Handbook requirements, we have consulted the CDC, Department of Social Services, and the Reopen Virginia Plan. While we are eager to return to in-person worship, our first duty is to provide a safe and healthy environment for all who gather on our campus. We look forward to providing a quality worship experience that is both meaningful and safe.

Healthy Church Team:

The Healthy Church Team was tasked to create a plan for reopening our church in a safe manner. The team members include:

- Pastor Mark Miller
- Amy Simpson (Church Leadership Council)
- Kendall Rasberry (Trustee)
- Dr. Cliff Cutchins (Lay Leader)
- Lee Entsminger (Lay Leader)
- Judy Gofus (Lay Leader)
- Mike Peterson (Lay Leader)
- Sarah Peterson (Lay Leader)
- Heidi Wimbush (Lay Leader)
- Pam Bentley (Youth Ministry)
- Chuck Cassidy (Hospitality)
- Mike Felts (Security)
- Jodi Fox (Children's Ministry)
- Pam Peskoe (Adult & Childcare Ministries)

Reopening Date:

Our target reopening date is September 20, 2020, in the Sanctuary. We encourage everyone to check in regularly for updates at vbumc.org/covid-19.

Recorded worship services will continue via Facebook and YouTube, and we are exploring the opportunities to livestream as well. People over 65, infants, and those vulnerable persons are encouraged to continue worshipping from the safety of their homes online.

Children in attendance on September 20, 2020, will experience worship in the service with their parents and must be able to follow all of the same rules, including wearing a mask for the duration of the service. No children's experiences will be offered at this time. We will continue monitoring the situation and only offer children's programming once it is safe to resume doing so. Children age 5 and over are welcome to attend worship with their parents. Worship bags will not be available.

What do I need to do prior to in-person worship?

Complete a Health Acknowledgment Form provided by the Virginia Conference. This form will need to be completed prior to attending in-person worship. The link to this form will be available on our website at vbumc.org/covid-19. It asks the standard questions related to COVID-19 exposure, including travel, symptoms, contact, and testing. In order to maintain confidentiality, the form will be reviewed and approved by Pastor Mark Miller only.

The form must be filled out each week prior to attending worship. We encourage you to fill it out electronically using the link that will be provided. This form must be returned by the Wednesday prior to the Sunday Worship Service no later than 8:00 pm. If you are unable to complete the form online, you may call the church office and complete the questionnaire verbally. The deadline of Wednesday at 8:00 pm still applies. This registration form indicates your intention to attend worship and allows us to ensure that we are in compliance with both social distancing and capacity requirements. Our current capacity for seating will allow us to seat 115 people safely.

For walk-in visitors on the day of worship, our greeters will offer contact-free screening prior to admittance. This will be accomplished by having guests read the poster-sized Health Questionnaire outside of the main entrance and affirm that

they meet the qualifications to attend in-person worship. These posters are large replicas of the Health Acknowledgment Poster available at vbumc.org/covid-19. The availability for walk-in visitors will be contingent upon having the physical capacity to seat all registered guests first. Remaining seats can be offered to visitors if they meet the criteria. Due to seating capacity restrictions, it is critical that everyone register in advance.

What can I expect the day of worship?

Prior to Leaving Home:

- Please stay home if you are sick, or feel you may be getting sick.
- Take everyone's temperatures. You must be below 100.4°F to attend in-person worship or any other in-person gathering.
- Bring your mask. Every person attending in-person worship or an in-person gathering is required to wear a mask at all times. There are no exceptions. Our online worship experience is available for those that are unable to meet this requirement.
- Bring hand sanitizer.
- If you so desire, you may bring your Bible from home. All Bibles and Hymnals have been removed from the pews as they are difficult to clean and are often touched by multiple people.

Arriving for Worship:

- Signs will be posted reminding everyone to park in every other space.
- Parking volunteers will direct you where to park.
- Please maintain 6 feet of social distancing as you exit your vehicle.
- Masks must be worn from the time you exit your vehicle until the time you return to your vehicle.

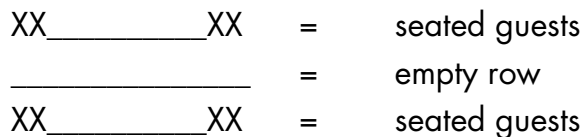
Entering the Building:

- All areas will be clearly marked with both directional signs indicating traffic flow, and CDC signage reminding everyone to maintain 6 feet of social distance. Signs will also be posted that we require everyone to wear a mask at all times, and reiterating the rules for hygiene and no physical contact. Floor markers will indicate 6-foot social distancing for those waiting to complete check-in.

- Enter the building through the designated doors only. We will have “Enter Here” signs and greeters stationed outside to assist you. The entrance will be the main sanctuary entry point. Likewise, after worship you will be directed to the designated exits by greeters. Signage will clearly mark the traffic pattern and everyone will exit through the glass doors of the Welcome Center.
- Note the floor decals indicating 6 feet of social distancing as the greeters begin seating. There will also be several signs at the entry reminding everyone of the protocols. We ask that you remain patient as our greeters seat everyone.
- A greeter will meet you at the entry and confirm that you are registered for worship and have a properly completed and approved health questionnaire on file. Once confirmed, you will be escorted to a seat that allows for 6 feet of social distancing. Please remain in the seat that the greeters and ushers have indicated and do not sit in any of the areas with signage requesting that you skip/avoid those seats.
- Families will be seated together, but otherwise expect to be seated with appropriate distancing of 6 feet.
- No handshakes or hugging.
- Coffee service will be suspended.
- Observe the 6-foot social distancing signs in restrooms and wait outside if they are fully occupied.

During Worship:

- Sanctuary seating will be offered at the ends of each pew with an empty row of pews between guests, as illustrated below:



For larger families, we would reserve the entire row with a row skipped between them and the next family.

- Wearing a mask is required—bring your mask with you as you will be required to wear it at all times. Parents will be responsible for ensuring that children wear their masks at all times. Parents with children will be seated near exit doors. If children are unable to wear masks for the duration of the

- service, parents will be asked to exit. Once a parent exits because of a mask issue for a child, they will not be permitted to re-enter.
- No special children's time, children's experiences, or children's worship bags will be available at this time.
 - No congregational singing—you may hum or speak the words; however, singing is not permitted. All pew Bibles and Hymnals have been removed from the back of the pews at this time. No in-person singing by anyone, and no wind instruments are permitted at this time.
 - Communion will be administered in accordance with Bishop Lewis' Communion protocol. This includes picking up a prepackaged communion set as you exit the church. You will take communion in your vehicle and dispose of all trash at home.
 - Offering plates will be available at the exit doors to the Welcome Center. Online giving and text-to-give continue to be the preferred methods of contact-free giving. Information about both of those options is available on the website as well as Pastor Mark's weekly email.

After Worship:

- Greeters/Ushers will dismiss the congregation by row.
- No coffee service will be provided.
- Observe the restroom signage for proper social distancing.
- Observe proper social distancing of 6 feet when leaving the parking lot.
- There will be no fellowship gatherings before or after the service onsite.
- At the conclusion of the worship service, we ask that everyone exit the building promptly.

Enforcement Plan:

In the event an attendee fails to follow these requirements, rules, protocols and guidelines, including, but not limited to, the requirements for pre-worship self-monitoring, pre-registration, parking rules, facility use, and physical social distancing (i.e. stay 6 feet or more away from others), that attendee will be denied access and/or asked to leave. If an attendee refuses to abide by the rules after being asked to do so, the church must immediately end the service and send all attendees home. The person that violated the requirements, rules, protocols and guidelines will not be allowed back on church property until they agree to comply with all of the requirements, rules, protocols, and guidelines.

The health and safety of our church family is our top priority and by ensuring that everyone follows the requirements, rules, protocols and guidelines, we can be in the best position to keep everyone healthy and safe.

Cleaning Plan:

We have contracted a professional cleaning service that will be using COVID-19 rated disinfectant products where appropriate in combination with Clorox wipes, chlorinated bleach spray, and Protex medical grade disinfectant. The professional cleaning team will arrive after all onsite events, hours of preschool operation, and any special events, and will disinfect all spaces. During all gatherings, our Maintenance Supervisor, Gerry Dooley, will work in coordinated effort with our Ministry Team Leaders to clean spaces before, during, and after use as reasonable and necessary. Every space in use will be properly disinfected after events and before anyone else utilizes the space. Children's spaces will also include the cleaning of toys with soap and water, the removal of toys that cannot be properly sanitized, and daily toy rotation for any toys that are deemed hygienically safe.

We are currently planning to offer only one service to avoid between-service cleaning of the sanctuary and shared spaces. In the event that we later decide to offer multiple services, we will do so with a minimum of 60 minutes between events for cleaning and disinfecting.

Other Services:

What can I expect when I volunteer?

We encourage those in vulnerable groups (the elderly and/or medically fragile) to refrain from volunteering at this time. We value and appreciate the hard work and dedication of all of our volunteers and we want to protect those among us that are most vulnerable.

All volunteers will:

- Submit the weekly Health Acknowledgment Form by Wednesday at 8:00 pm prior to the week of service.
- Wear masks at all times.
- Observe social distancing requirements.

- Practice healthy hygiene including: hand washing with soap and water for 20 seconds; appropriately cover coughs and sneezes; avoid touching one's face.
- Make use of hand sanitizing stations as needed.
- Wear disposable gloves provided for all volunteers on our sanitization team.
- Avoid physical contact with others.
- Do not pass any items to those in attendance.

When will Childcare & Nursery services resume?

At this time, we will not be offering any children's experiences. We will continue to monitor this situation and will only resume children's activities when it is deemed safe to do so. While our Limited Childcare Plan has been approved, we are not offering a children's experience at this time.

When will Sunday School resume?

At this time, Sunday School will not be offered in person.

Virtual Sunday School options are available.

What about Small Groups?

All small groups, Bible studies, fitness groups, youth and children's groups will continue to meet virtually until further notice.

What about non-worship gatherings of 50 people or fewer?

During Stage 2, all in-person gatherings, indoor or outdoor, will be limited to no more than 50 people with strict 6-foot social distancing between all parties (except family groups from a single household) and face coverings. Face coverings are required for both indoor and outdoor events. This applies to all gatherings other than worship services.

All existing standards for in-person worship apply to non-worship gatherings as well. These include: the requirement to affirm that Health Questionnaire form conditions are met, groups are responsible for cleaning before and after meetings, face coverings must be worn at all times, and 6-foot social distancing is required. All in-person gatherings must be pre-approved by the District Superintendent and

by the Healthy Church Team. For small group meetings onsite, pre-registered guests will receive the poster-sized Health Questionnaire outside of the main entrance and affirm that they meet the qualifications to attend in-person gathering. These posters are large replicas of the Health Acknowledgment Poster available at vbumc.org/covid-19.

Any person wishing to bring a guest will need to confirm that capacity exists for any guests by contacting the group leader prior to the event. The leader will communicate the requirements to guests beforehand. The name and contact information for all attendees will be collected, and provided to Pastor Mark Miller in a sealed envelope. He will keep that information in locked storage in the event that we require that information for contact tracing purposes.

What about Committee Meetings?

All committee meetings will continue to meet virtually until further notice.

What about baptisms?

Baptisms may occur in Stage 2 as long as physical distancing (6 feet or more) and all other requirements for in-person worship are observed, including completion of the health questionnaire and the use of masks.

What about weddings?

Weddings may occur in Stage 2 as long as physical distancing (6 feet or more) and all other requirements for in-person worship are observed, including completion of health questionnaires for all guests and the use of masks. We will allow for a total capacity of 50 people for an approved wedding event.

What about funerals?

Funerals may occur in Stage 2 as long as physical distancing (6 feet or more) and all other requirements for in-person worship are observed, including completion of health questionnaires for all guests and the use of masks. We will allow for a total capacity of 50 people for an approved funeral event.

What about communion?

We will resume communion for in-person worship using only pre-packaged elements. You can find an example of what that looks like [here](#).

The communion table will be prepared by volunteers using gloves and face coverings. Pre-packaged communion elements will be placed on the Sanctuary communion table during the service at communion liturgy. We will include a loaf of bread and juice on the Sanctuary communion table to be visibly blessed, broken, and lifted by Pastor Mark Miller, who will be wearing a mask and gloves.

Following the consecration of the elements, the pre-packaged communion elements will be moved to a table in the Welcome Center exit area. They will be spaced on the table so that only physical contact will be made only by the person selecting the elements. Worshippers will pick up their pre-packaged communion elements as they leave the worship space and exit the building. Volunteers will replenish the elements as needed using trays to keep everything contact-free.

Before partaking of the elements, worshippers will be encouraged to practice good hand hygiene. Worshippers will be invited to partake of the elements once they are in their cars, where they are able to safely remove their masks. All packaging should be disposed of at home.

Gluten-free elements will be available for those with allergies and/or gluten sensitivities.

What is the plan if someone falls ill after attending an in-person worship or non-worship event?

The implementation of the Health Questionnaire form is designed to help us know the names and contact information for every person we serve. If you attend a worship service and become ill, or know of another person that has attended and is later diagnosed as COVID-19 positive, we ask that you contact our church office immediately. Your confidentiality is very important to us, so your name will not be published. Once we are notified of a potential exposure, we will:

- Contact the Virginia Department of Health
- Notify the District Superintendent of Virginia

- Notify all person in attendance of the event by email, text, and phone as necessary that we have received notification that someone in attendance has reported that they are COVID-19 positive, or presumed positive. We will use standard language for all contacts. That notification letter will also be available at vbumc.org/covid-19. While we do not want to create panic, we do want to give everyone the opportunity to mitigate the potential spread of COVID-19.

Communication:

- We have added a special update section for any COVID-19 related changes to our website at vbumc.org/covid-19. This webpage will be updated with any new or changing information.
- The weekly email newsletters will continue to provide valuable information and updates.
- Additional platforms that will be used to communicate programming information will include Facebook, Instagram, and US Mail.
- We will purchase and display the following CDC posters prominently to encourage hand hygiene, mask compliance, and social distancing:
 - [CDC Handwashing Poster](#)
 - [CDC Stop the Spread Poster](#)
 - [CDC Wear a Mask Poster](#)
- We will add additional posters using guidance from the CDC for children's areas, restrooms, entrances, and exits.
- Traffic flow diagrams for entering and exiting the building will be included with our plan at vbumc.org/covid-19.