

## Protocols and Procedures for Memorial UMC Facility

As we begin to once again open our facility for gatherings of church groups and community groups, a small group nominated by the Church Council has sought best practices from the CDC Health guidelines and other churches. We have taken into account the normal usage of our church facility before COVID, and we have the following procedures, protocols and recommendations.

Each group that meets in our facility, whether a Sunday School class, worship group, or church committee is responsible for following the guidance here.

The United Methodist Church follows John Wesley's Simple Rules:

- *Do No Harm*
- *Do Good*
- *Stay in Love with God* ("find our moral direction, our wisdom, our courage, our strength to live faithfully from the One who authored us, called us, sustains us, and sends us into the world as witnesses who daily practice the way of living with Jesus."—Bishop Reuben Job)

We will always start with policies and protocols that keep us from doing harm, even inadvertently. "Doing good" will mean having practices that you may feel unnecessary but provide protection for the most vulnerable. Finally, we find our guidance and wisdom not only from many sources of wisdom in the world (including health organizations and disease specialists) but also from God, who in Jesus Christ, offered us not just freedom in our own lives, but responsibility toward our neighbors.

*All of these protocols are subject to change as the situation changes, cases go down and guidance from the Texas Health Department, medical professionals and the CDC changes.*

### **COVID-19 RISK STATEMENT**

**By attending a Memorial UMC gathering, you acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19, the inherent risk of public assembly, and the possibility that you may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19 at Memorial UMC. If you are unable to accept these risks, do not attend a Memorial UMC event.**

### **DESIGNATED POINT PEOPLE/HEALTH GREETERS**

- Each time there is a gathering of any size at the church, there will be designated people to help remind us of the protocols.
- They may serve in many capacities, including health checkers, traffic directors and ushers in the sanctuary
- They will be available to help you find a seat.
- They will remind people of the rules and protocols and may ask you to choose to comply or, if you cannot/do not wish to comply, to leave
- They will also receive and respond to complaints
- *All health greeters will be offered training in implementing our health protocols*

***IF AT ANY TIME, YOU DO NOT WISH TO COMPLY WITH A HEALTH GREETER'S REQUESTS OR ARE IN VIOLATION OF THESE PROCEDURES, YOU WILL BE ASKED***

**TO LEAVE THE BUILDING. THIS IS FOR YOUR SAFETY AND FOR THE SAFETY OF OTHERS.**

**ENTRY PROCEDURES**

- Entry to the Office Area/Sanctuary/Parlor Area will be at the office door under the portico
- Entry to the Gym will be at the door by the restrooms (NE corner of the gym)
- There will be a temperature check and symptom screening for EVERY person who enters the building
- EVERY person who enters the building will be registered as an attendee, no matter how long they stay (for contact tracing purposes)
- Contact information for those we don't have it for in our files will be required
- Masks will be required at ALL TIMES in the building (with an exception made for a speaker in the sanctuary). If you do not have an appropriate mask, one will be provided for you. (see face covering section)

**PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

- We request that you maintain a 6 foot distance from people from other households at all times while in the building (and strongly recommended outside as well). We know that it can sometimes get tight in hallways, but this distancing is key to keeping people as safe as possible.
- For this reason, we request that any visiting be done outside instead of in the sanctuary.
- There will not be a traditional passing of the peace during worship.
- This will also require us to stagger our leaving of a room or sanctuary.
- Please pay attention to distancing markers where present.

**FACE COVERINGS**

- Wearing an appropriate face covering correctly will be mandatory in the building.
- Posters with correct usage will be placed around the building.
- Bandanas or gaiters are not considered appropriate face coverings for this purpose nor are masks with valves.
- Masks in both adult and children's sizes will be provided if you do not have one or remember yours.
- Point people may ask you to keep your mask on or to leave if you cannot/will not.

**HYGIENE**

- We strongly encourage frequent handwashing, though there is also a limit to the number of people who can be in the restrooms (1 person or single household at a time in the restrooms in the front of the complex and 2 people at a time in the gym restrooms). Hand sanitizing dispensers are available throughout the buildings.
- Water fountains will not be available at this time.
- We will be frequently cleaning high-touch areas, but also encourage you to avoid touching those high-touch surfaces when possible (door jambs, door knobs, etc)
- Individual groups are in charge of sanitizing surfaces in their spaces if a group is immediately coming in after them.

## **IF SOMEONE IS EXHIBITING SYMPTOMS**

- You will be asked to remain in an isolation space until you can safely leave the building
- Please remain masked when possible
- Point people will be in charge of calling for either transportation or EMS
- All who have come in close contact with the person will be notified. If you are still in the building when you receive the notice of close contact, we strongly recommend immediate handwashing and showering/changing clothing when you get home.

## **CONTACT TRACING**

- All groups will provide for contact tracing.
- If you become symptomatic or have a positive test within 48 hours of being present at the church facility or in a church gathering, contact the church office immediately.
- The church point person will immediately contact all who were in attendance at the event to inform them of the positive diagnosis

## **WORSHIP PROTOCOLS**

- ONLY the back double doors to the sanctuary will be used as an entrance
- Once you and your household are in your seat(s), please remain there and do not walk about the sanctuary to speak with others
- Please do not sit in any pews which have been taped off
- We will maintain distancing and mask wearing during worship
- We will limit the sanctuary to 50% of our capacity.
- There will be reminder cards of our protocols in the pews.
- If you need to leave to go to the restroom, you will be instructed by a health greeter on the appropriate pathway to take.
- When the service is over, please wait to leave until directed
- ONLY the side doors to the north entryway or the door to the chapel will be used as exits from the sanctuary space. Once you are in the entryway or the chapel, proceed immediately to the exterior exit.
- Communion bags will be handed to you and instructions given for receiving communion outside of the sanctuary.
- Be aware that worship may also be simulcast on our live Facebook page and/or recorded. You will be informed if either of these are happening.

## **COMMUNICATING PROCEDURES**

- This document will be sent out to every household and will also be accessible on our website before use of the building begins. Reminders or updates of procedures will be sent out via email.
- A shorter "what to expect" document will also be sent out (please share it with those who may not otherwise receive it!)
- Reminder signs will be available at various places in the facility

## **FOOD AND BEVERAGES**

- For the time being, we ask that no food or beverages be consumed in the buildings.
- If you need to eat or drink and thus remove your mask, we ask you to go outside.
- We will not have our regular coffee or snacks before worship

- We will not have receptions involving food or drink
- Sunday School classes are also asked to not have beverages or snacks
- Check with a health greeter in case of a medical need to have water available.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

- All rooms will have a capacity based on distancing recommendations. If a room exceeds its capacity, your group will be asked to move to a larger space.
- We will communicate with each group (Sunday School class, UMW, youth group) to see if the space they wish to use will accommodate their needs
- For the purposes of this document, a “household” is defined as
  - Anyone you share a living space with
  - Anyone around whom you are regularly unmasked
  - Anyone you have provided transportation to the church

## **CURRENT OFFICE PROTOCOLS (*These are set by Pastor Cynthia in consultation with the office staff and are subject to change as well.*)**

- You may be in your office alone (or with someone from your household) unmasked.
- If two or more people from different households are in the same office, the person who is visiting that office should be masked.
- If two or more people from different households are in the same office but both of them are fully vaccinated, ***by mutual agreement***, they may remain unmasked
- If you are unsure, ask whether the people in the room are more comfortable with you masking—assume you should stay masked unless you are told otherwise.
- If two people from different households are in a common space (Moore Room, Pearce Room, parlor, etc), they should both be masked.

*All hygiene protocols (handwashing, etc.) from the larger document will also apply here. Staff may also consume food and drinks on site, but should do so either alone or outside.*

*\*\*\*We want to thank the following individuals for serving on this task force: Margaret Adams, Laura Smith, Kathleen Beuttenmueller, Alberta Shelton, Kendall Smith and Cynthia Keppler-Karrer. Please direct any questions or other thoughts concerning these guidelines to these folks!\*\*\**

Original document dated April 4, 2021  
Revised April 25, 2021