

## Protocols and Procedures for Memorial UMC Facility (May 26, 2021)

### **UPDATES IN BOLD**

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 worship or small group or ministry gathering\*\*, 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 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*

*\*\*The office area and administrative meetings that involve 1-3 people from different households will follow current office protocol (at the end of the document).*

**PLEASE COMPLY WITH THESE REQUESTS AND REQUIREMENTS. 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 are required for those who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19. If you are fully vaccinated, masks are requested in certain circumstances—see “Face Coverings” section for more details.**

**PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

- We will be maintaining physical distancing measures in our seating, both in classrooms and in the sanctuary.
- Unvaccinated people should still try to maintain 6 feet of distance between themselves and people outside their family unit for the safety of themselves and others.
- Fully vaccinated people are requested to maintain a reasonable distance (3 feet recommended) while visiting inside. Please also pay attention to other people's preferences.
- Everyone will be offered the opportunity to wear a button or sticker indicating your openness to contact:
  - **Open to Hugs!**—this person is fully vaccinated and is okay with hugs and closer contact
  - **Fistbumps & Handshakes**—this person is okay with greetings that are hand-to-hand
  - **3 Feet Please!**—this person wants to maintain a reasonable distance without physical contact

**FACE COVERINGS**

- We **REQUIRE** that masks be worn at all times by people who are not fully vaccinated (2 weeks beyond your final shot) for COVID-19. This is in effect for people age 2 and older.
- We **REQUEST** that masks be worn by people who are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 when moving through the building. Once you are seated (for a meeting, Sunday School or worship), you may remove your mask. (This change will take effect when the overall full vaccination rate for Travis County reaches 45%.)
- Posters with correct usage will be placed around the building—please wear your mask correctly and appropriately
- Bandanas or gaiters are not considered appropriate face coverings for this purpose.
- Masks in both adult and children's sizes will be provided if you do not have one or remember yours.

## HYGIENE

- We strongly encourage frequent handwashing. **Be aware of others in the bathroom not to overcrowd.** Hand sanitizing dispensers are available throughout the buildings.
- Water fountains will not be available at this time. **(See also Food and Beverages)**
- **We request that different groups allow a period of time between events in any space to allow for a full air exchange. This will differ by room (if you need to do this, please check with the office to determine your room's time).**

## 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
- **Visiting is allowed, but we encourage you to do that in the courtyard or the parlor when possible.**
- Please do not sit in any pews which have been taped off
- We will maintain distancing during worship
- **Sanctuary capacity is 50% at this time, but may be expanded as the percentage of fully vaccinated people in Travis County rises.**
- There will be reminder cards of our protocols in the pews.
- 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 will be served in individual covered containers. (More on this before our first communion service scheduled for June 13.)**

## 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**

- **We plan on starting to have bottled water available during the 10:30-11am timeframe on the patio once the rate of fully vaccinated people in Travis County reaches 50%.**
- We will not have our coffee or snacks before worship
- We will not have receptions involving food or drink at this time
- **Sunday School classes are asked to provide only individually packaged foods and beverages.**
- 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.*)**

- **Fully vaccinated office staff may be in the building with other fully vaccinated staff with their masks off.**
- **Staff or members who are not fully vaccinated are requested to keep masks on at all times while in the building.**
- **If a vendor or other person comes into the office, the staff is requested to don masks if that person is not fully vaccinated or if we are unsure of that person’s vaccination status**
- **Staff is asked to follow Wesley School masking rules when in the same space as Wesley kids.**