

Returning to Sanctuary Worship

Fenton UMC Plan for Phase One

May 15, 2020

Why, Where & What? –

We seek to worship in the sanctuary, where we can join voices and hearts in a way not possible online. Sanctuary worship will have limits on it due to St. Louis County restrictions. Our first worship phase will enable us to adapt and learn ways to enrich future worship during the months and possibly years that we will be living with COVID-19. **We seek to provide worship in community with reasonable precautions to reduce (but not eliminate) the risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus.** We will continue to record and make available Worship Online for all who are not able to be present physically. While the rules are for inside the building, **we encourage folks to put on masks as soon as they get out of their vehicles.** This way we reduce the possibility of transmission when people speak with others outside. At least one outside door will remain propped open from 9:45 -10:05 and for 20 minutes following the end of the Worship Service.

When? –

As of May 18th, St. Louis County allows “congregating” for worship with stipulations. The rules for “gathering” do not apply for public worship. We are beginning worship after we have reviewed the plan and feel we can implement it effectively. That will be May 31st, Pentecost Sunday. This works theologically and also decoratively. Birth of the Church = rebirth of sanctuary worship. We will use red crepe paper and balloons to “block off” pews (instead of crime tape, etc...).

Who? –

Whoever feels comfortable is welcome, but **we strongly encourage those who are considered High Risk or Vulnerable to COVID-19 virus by the CDC to not attend at this time.** See the end of the plan for details. And, **we insist that people who are ill do not attend church.**

How? –

Fenton UMC is **applying the current St. Louis County restrictions and the CDC recommendations.** This means:

- 1. We will limit attendance to 110 (25% occupancy)** in the sanctuary, foyer and choir area. The ushers will monitor this.
- 2. We will create social distancing of 6 ft. or more** by marking the pew rows that are not to be occupied. By leaving 2 empty pews between each occupied pew, this creates 7 ft. of space in front and behind. Each household should leave at least 2 arm lengths between other households sitting in their pew. As people move in and out of church we encourage one way movement through doorways and thru the isles to maintain social distancing.
- 3. We will reduce the interactions and the amount of contact that occur by only having only essential interactions.** Friendship (sign in) Pads, loose Kleenex boxes will be removed and offering plates will not be used. Instead, we will have a large jar in the Narthex that folks can drop their gifts and offering into. We will attach Kleenex boxes in the Narthex and foyer that require only touching the Kleenex you are removing. During communion, only one person will touch each of the elements and they will use gloves to hand out the element to people sitting in the pew. Empty cups will be dropped in a basket or bowl, so that no one else need touch the cup. **We will not resume Sunday School, Nursery or the “Coffee & Donut Corner” during Phase One.** We will make interactions as contactless as possible. Bulletins will not be used the first week or two. There will be no noisy offering or children coming forward for the Children’s message.

4. **We require that everyone wear a mask when entering and exiting the building and put it on when singing. You may remove the mask when seated and listening during the service.** Children 2 and under, or persons with medical reasons will not need a mask. While wearing a mask offers little protection for the individual wearing it, it does reduce the possibility of that person from transferring the virus to others.

5. **We will reduce need to touch surfaces that many others may have touched.** We will have at least one outside door propped open before and after worship for folks to enter and exit without touching a door. The center doors between Narthex and Sanctuary, the doors between Foyer and Narthex, and the door between Hall & Choir Room will be left open. The drinking fountain has cups to use.

6. **Bathrooms will be available.** Some brief interaction with others is possible going in and out of the restroom. People will be wearing masks. The Bathrooms will be cleaned and sanitized before and after the Worship Service. Folks using the restroom are advised to wash your hands after using the toilet and to shut off the water and open the door with a paper towel and then dispose of it in the trash can outside the bathroom. By only being at church for about an hour will reduce the need to use a restroom.

7. **The sanctuary will be cleaned every week, and high touch surfaces will be sanitized.** If there are special services between weekly services, then all the high touch surfaces will be sanitized between each service. The bathrooms and drinking fountains will be cleaned and sanitized before and after each service. The door to the AED will be unbolted, but the lights in the Education Bldg. will be off and except in an emergency, no one is to be in the Education Bldg., Fellowship Hall or Kitchen during Sunday Morning Worship.

8. There will be an **instructional video** to educate and show folks how things will work. This video will be on our website by May 24th. During the service, the ushers will be the “go-to” folks.

Who is considered High Risk or Vulnerable to COVID-19 virus? (From the CDC)

COVID-19 is a new disease and there is limited information regarding risk factors for severe disease. Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, **older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions** might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Based on what we know now, those at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are:

- [People 65 years and older](#)
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility

People of all ages with [underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled](#), including:

- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- People who are immunocompromised
 - Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease