

First United Presbyterian Church Session COVID-19 Response Policy

Fall, 2020

The following policies and practices will govern the ministries, programs, and property use of First United Presbyterian Church of Fayetteville, AR until such time as—in the formal evaluation of the Session--the COVID-19 health and safety risks (number of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths) in Fayetteville have been substantially reduced, and/or until seasonal changes in weather require additional adaptations.

I. General

- a. Clean masks (cloth or disposable) will be worn at all times on the church property and outdoor grounds. Exceptions:
 - i. Worship leaders while they are speaking or singing, if they are at least 16 feet from anyone in their line of breath projection.
 - ii. Church members actively gardening or tending the outdoor church grounds by themselves, with 6' social distancing.
 - iii. Pre-Kindergarten children, at their parents' discretion.
- b. At least 6' social distancing will be practiced by everyone in the church buildings or at any planned outdoor event.
- c. Church buildings and the Church Office will be locked, and will remain closed to delivery persons, visitors, church members, and First School parents, except in emergencies.
- d. Session, deacons, ministry team, and staff meetings will be held by Zoom only.
- e. The pastor, staff member, elder, or other person in charge of each Session-approved church event will record names and contacts for all meetings sponsored by FUPC on forms provided, whether on or off the premises.
- f. When outdoor church meetings are approved on the church grounds, restrooms will be assigned through the office. C & C will clean and sanitize these restrooms on normal workdays before and after the event. During the event, group leaders will ensure use of only the assigned restrooms. Participants will be asked to enter one at a time and to sanitize after themselves. Leaders will ensure that any doors that are unlocked are relocked.

II. Worship

- a. Continue the 8:30 a.m. outdoor in-person worship service following the protocol guidelines for in-person worship in compliance with the CDC and state regulations until weather no longer permits comfortable outdoor worship.
- b. Continue to livestream worship at 10 a.m. until September 13. On September 13 (Kick-off Sunday), the main livestreamed worship service will return to the normal Fall schedule (8:30 a.m. outdoor worship, 9:30 a.m. Spiritual Growth by Zoom or outdoors, 11:00 a.m. livestreamed worship).
- c. Celebrate communion in person outdoors at 8:30 a.m. August 16, October 4, and November 15, using prepackaged elements.

- d. Celebrate communion at the livestreamed worship service on October 4 and November 15, with elements to be picked up at the church and served by elders or brought to the homes of those who cannot get out by the deacons.
- e. In late October, or when weather no longer permits comfortable outdoor worship, we will plan, if the COVID-19 situation permits, to move the 8:30 am service into the sanctuary using the same format: a 45-minute service (with masks and 6' social distancing, but no in person communion). A maximum of 75 persons will be allowed to be present in the sanctuary. Between now and the end of September, Worship Ministry, with the aid of the co-pastors and C & C Cleaning, will develop a traffic pattern for entering and exiting the sanctuary, create a seating chart for social distancing, and address other issues (i.e. number of attendees, restrooms) in compliance with (but possibly more cautious than) the CDC and state regulations for indoor worship services. The feasibility of indoor worship will be re-evaluated by the Worship ministry monthly.
- f. On recommendation from the Worship Ministry, the Session, at its October meeting, will reconsider 11:00 a.m. worship options, taking into account changes in COVID-19 risk factors.
- g. The music ministry staff will continue to research and recommend how singing may or may not be integrated into the indoor worship service (i.e. use of choir interns, small number of choir members, emphasis on instruments, congregational singing, etc.).
- h. Weddings and funerals may be held outdoors, and possibly later indoors, based on the same Session determinations and criteria that govern Sunday worship services.

III. Personnel, Staff, and Office Policies

- a. The primary consideration, with regard to reopening the Church Office and to the general ministry functioning of the staff and pastors, is protecting their safety and health.
- b. No staff member or pastor will be required to be physically present on campus if they are concerned that doing so will compromise their health unnecessarily.
- c. The church office will remain closed and locked, even when staff are present. Church members will avoid entering the office or knocking except when absolutely necessary. Delivery persons will be met at the doors. Maintenance and service workers will be masked and will honor 6' social distancing.
- d. Records and contact information will be kept by the church person admitting and accompanying maintenance and service workers, and church members entering the premises, to allow contact tracing if infection occurs. Clipboards with appropriate forms will be provided at key locations to facilitate this process. Appropriate signage will be provided to guide 12-Step group participants and leaders.
- e. Staff meetings will be held via Zoom.

- f. When necessary, the office manager, co-pastors, and financial administrator may work from the Church Office.
- g. No more than four people are to be in the main office area at the same time, all masked and honoring social distancing.
- h. Other church staff will continue to work from home, except when using resources or equipment from their offices is necessary, when leading worship, or when leading specific approved outdoor activities.
- i. When First School reopens, First School staff will remain in downstairs Calvin building or in the upstairs Knox building, except for pre-arranged activities in Fellowship Hall in small groups when necessary because of weather. Church staff will remain upstairs, except for specific pre-arranged meetings outdoors, or if necessary, in large, well-ventilated spaces with masks and 6' social distancing.
- j. Specific exceptions to these policies may be considered by prior request to the co-pastors as heads of staff.

IV. First School

- a. First School staff are authorized by the Session to be in the downstairs area of Calvin and the Knox building as necessary during the rest of the summer to prepare for the September 10 opening of First School.
- b. First School family orientation will be held individually by family appointment on September 8 and 9. Parent and child will be permitted into their classroom for this a one-time 20-minute orientation for parents to see where their child will be cared for. Sanitization will be done between appointments.
- c. When school starts parents will not enter the building. Children will be dropped off outside their classroom and temperatures and screening of child and parent will be taken outside before admitting the child into the building by teachers.
- d. Separate comprehensive First School COVID-19 policies have been developed and will be in effect at all times.
- e. First School staff will not use the church office area, and will remain downstairs in Calvin or in the Knox building, using outdoor access rather than coming up the stairs except when pre-arranged use of the Fellowship Hall is necessary because of weather.
- f. First School chapel will be led by the church pastors and staff by YouTube video. The videos will be shown to the children in appropriately ventilated and distanced spaces.

V. Property and Vehicle Use

- a. Except for the three 12-Step groups that are already authorized to meet in the building, groups not primarily constituted by church members and led by church staff, elders, or pastors cannot be authorized to use the FUPC building or grounds until further notice, based on the status of COVID-19 in Fayetteville. This includes Scout Troop 142, Zumba, and Yoga. Chinese School does not plan to meet on the campus during the Fall. It is crucial that no one who has been

exposed to COVID-19 will be present in 12-Step meetings. This is to be announced with signage at entrances. Each 12-step group is to assign one person to record phone numbers of those who are present (since names are anonymous) in case there is a need for contact tracing.

- b. Church vehicles will not be used to transport children, youth, or adults until further notice, based on the status of COVID-19 in Fayetteville. Transportation to any authorized church ministry events will need to be provided by families in their own vehicles, rather than combining unrelated, previously unexposed riders in the same vehicles.
- c. C & C Cleaning Service will continue to clean and sanitize all areas of the building before and after each use.

VI. Youth Ministry

- a. The annual End of Summer Party was approved by the Youth Ministry Subcommittee in principle, as long as everyone is masked throughout, 6' distancing is maintained at all times, and transportation to and from the event can be arranged by parents taking their own teenagers (and possibly close friends who are mutually exposed already) in family vehicles.
- b. Face to face youth ministry activities will continue to be held outdoors, as weather permits, into the Fall. In poor weather, events and groups will be held by Zoom. Decisions about possible indoor activities when weather requires will be made by recommendation of the Youth Ministry Subcommittee to Session. Use of the building must be authorized by specific Session vote until such time as the state of the virus risk in Fayetteville is significantly reduced. Lower Witherspoon restrooms will be opened and cleaned ahead and afterward by C & C for approved youth gatherings. Youth will use only these restrooms, one person at a time, with each one sanitizing after use.
- c. Fall continuation of Confirmation has not yet been determined. Zoom participation in the Spring was deemed effective by the teachers.

VII. Spiritual Growth

- a. Our Fall spiritual growth emphasis will kick off on Sunday, September 13, with an outdoor CARNival drive-through experience in the church parking areas.
- b. The Spiritual Growth ministry is still exploring effective ways to gather children to further their spiritual growth during COVID-19, without spreading disease. There is no plan at present to resume Sunday morning children's classes or a church nursery in the fall. Ideas will continue to be generated and explored as the COVID situation and risks change.
- c. The children's FUPC YouTube channel will be continued, and families will be provided with materials at home to provide spiritual growth experiences with our children.
- d. One or two adult Zoom discussions will be resumed with new topics and/or books. Weekday adult small groups will continue by Zoom.

VIII. Fellowship

- a. Any Fellowship events that may be planned will follow the same protocol used for outdoor worship in compliance with CDC and state regulations and recommendations (attached).
- b. As weather permits, outdoor events may be planned until the virus recedes, with masks and 6" social distancing.
- c. No food or beverages will be prepared or provided for shared use by the Fellowship Ministry, but events may be planned that encourage people to bring their own food and beverages.
- d. Normally, a time frame of 45-60 minutes will be planned for outdoor fellowship events. Exceptions will be brought to Session for approval.
- e. The needs of children will be prominent in planning for social distancing during events, to encourage families to participate.
- f. FUPC small groups that choose to meet in person off church premises will gather outdoors, with masking and social distancing. The number of people gathering in a group will be determined by the space available outdoors for appropriate 6' social distancing. Homes will be entered by one person at a time for restroom use, and each person will sanitize the restroom after use.

IX. Outreach

- a. Our Outreach and Service ministries have continued throughout the COVID shutdown. Monthly meals continue to be prepared in the church kitchen and served at Seven Hills (third Fridays) and Trinity United Methodist Church (first Sundays). Volunteers are needed beginning in September. Church volunteers will use the main kitchen following CDC protocols. Attendance must be recorded by the person in charge of opening the building.
- a. Meetings continue by Zoom, including guests representing local outreach and service organizations and monthly Honduras ministry reports. Contributions are being received and distributed for CEO. Individuals and families with special needs are receiving help through the Individual Assistance Fund.

X. Stewardship

- a. Contributions will continue to be received by mail, bank draft, and through the website. Multiple options for remote giving will be introduced through the website "Giving" page, using the church's accounting system. A "Text-to-Give" option will allow church members and friends to make a worshipful gift at the time of the offering in the livestreamed Sunday service or at any time during the week.
- b. A locked box is used for checks and cash contributions at the current 8:30 a.m. service.
- c. If indoor worship is approved, the following procedures are recommended:
 - i. No passing of the plate.

- ii. Cash offerings may be placed in offering plates or boxes stationed around the sanctuary, so that offerings can be made during the offertory section of the worship service as a grateful response to God's grace, with social distancing observed.
 - iii. Offering cards (with a prayer of self-giving) will be available to bring forward as an act of worship for those who have given by bank draft, website, or text-to-give.
- d. The 2021 Stewardship Campaign will be primarily virtual, since the people at highest risk from COVID-19 (50 and older) will not be able to participate in any face-to-face events without undue health risk and all pledges are crucial.
 - i. A three-week Stewardship worship theme entitled "Christ, the Hope of our Changing World" from the mission statement will focus respectively on the strength, love, and grace that God provides us through Christ.
 - ii. Two stewardship mailings will be sent, similar to our previous campaigns. "Minutes for Stewardship" will be videotaped for the worship livestream.
 - iii. A virtual talent show and a virtual event that highlight various church ministries and outreach opportunities and time for questions, will substitute for the usual "Stewardship Brunch."
 - iv. Communion will be celebrated on Dedication Sunday. Prior to this celebration, members will drive to the church to be served the elements by elders. Deacons will deliver elements to shut-in members. After the elements have been distributed, pledges will also be received either at a separate location on the campus, or by deacons when they visit. Then communion will be celebrated as a congregation on Sunday morning during the livestreamed worship service and pledges will be dedicated.
 - v. Pledges can be made, and Stewardship materials can be downloaded through the new website.

XI. Presbyterian Women

- a. Presbyterian Women plan to involve the congregation in donating handmade or purchased masks for use by Fayetteville Public Schools.
- b. PW is planning a drive-through event on August 19 for women to pick up and pay for the Horizons Study Guide, drop off pledges to PW, and make mask donations.
- c. PW would like to recognize the 2020 Honorary Lifetime Members in a fellowship event that is safe and healthy. Additional plans will be presented to Session.
- d. Circles and the Covenant Group will resume by Zoom in September. Hooks and Needles does not plan to meet yet.
- e. Circles may meet in person outdoors with mask and social distancing. The number of people gathering in a group will be determined by the space available outdoors for appropriate 6' social distancing. Homes will be entered by one person at a time for restroom use, and each person will sanitize the restroom after use.

XII. Exceptions to this Policy

- a. Individual exceptions to this policy may be considered by direct written request to the Session. As always, the safety and health of church members and participants, staff, First School children, and the community will be the primary consideration.
- b. Requests for exceptions must be received by the co-pastors (Session moderators) and the Clerk of Session by the Friday nine days prior to a regularly scheduled Session meeting (on the second Sunday of each month). Special Session meetings or email votes will not be employed for the consideration of exceptions.
- c. All calendared events will appear as information on the monthly Session Consent Agenda as an additional safety measure.