

Shawnee Presbyterian Church Reopening Plan

10/13/2020

Mission

The Reopening Committee will follow guidelines from the CDC, PA Health Department, and Presbytery while developing a plan that allows our congregation and community to gather for worship in a safe and responsible manner.

In these uncertain times when we have been unable to come together in worship, we are sustained by the knowledge that the church is not the building; it is God's people (Ephesians 2:19-22). If the church must remain closed due to a resurgence of the virus or other factors, we remain committed to serving the community to the best of our ability through alternative worship options and continued mission work (Matthew 28:19-20). We hold fast to the truth that God is with us through all trials (Joshua 1:9).

Goals

The Reopening Committee is mindful of the need for sustainability through the change of seasons, holidays, staff capacity/burnout, and course of the pandemic. This plan will be updated as circumstances develop.

The plan assumes Monroe County remains in the Green phase and that the plan has been approved by all those required. If Monroe County returns to the Yellow or Red phase, the Session has stated that the church will immediately be closed.

Reopening Plan

Masks/Ventilation

- Beginning October 18, worshipers must wear a mask from arrival to departure.
- All doors and windows will remain open year-round, weather permitting. On days when the weather is too cold, windows will remain closed and the church will be preheated. Once seating begins, the heat will be turned off to minimize air circulation.
- A supply of masks will be provided by SPC at the door for visitors who need them.
- Worshipers who cannot or will not wear a mask are encouraged to remain at home and view the service when it is shared online.
- Window fans will be turned outward when windows are open. Ceiling fans will not be turned on.

Communication

- The updated Safety Guidelines will be shared with the congregation by Lori via email and by Rev. Hawk via newsletter.
- The general community will be able to find the full Reopening Plan and the Safety Guidelines on the SPC website, posted by Mike. Links will be posted to Facebook via Lori.
- Barb will update the church answering machine message to refer callers to the Safety Guidelines on the SPC website.

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- The radio station will run an announcement referring listeners to the Safety Guidelines online, uploaded by Vince.
- Midge will contact the local timeshares to make sure they have the correct update information to share with their guests.
- Worshipers will be asked to leave enough extra time for socially distanced entry and exit.
- Guidelines will encourage worshipers to take personal responsibility for their safety by following all precautions.
- Guidelines will encourage worshipers to bring a “Worship Kit” containing basic sanitation supplies and other items they deem necessary to enjoy worship and avoid placing the burden of supplies on SPC.

Arrival & Seating

- Doors will be opened half an hour before the service begins.
- The Deacons will manage a schedule for each Sunday that includes a) one greeter and one usher or b) two ushers. Guidelines for these roles will be provided to those who volunteer.
- The greeter will admit worshipers to Sanctuary individually upon arrival, maintaining 6-foot distancing while waiting at the door. The next worshiper/group will be ushered to their pew after the previous worshiper/group is seated.
- Worshipers sharing a sheltering connection (families, households, friend groups) may sit together. Worshipers who do not share an existing connection should observe 6-foot distancing from other worshipers.
- The usher will, as much as possible, use the side pews for households or groups and use the center pews for singles and couples.
- The guidelines will request that groups of five people or more provide advance notice via the church phone so that we may mark off a large enough section in the Sanctuary and avoid delays in seating. Barb will check the answering machine.
- The greeter will encourage worshipers to use SPC- provided hand sanitizer at the door upon entry and exit.
- Bulletins will be placed in the Narthex, where worshipers can take the copies they need. The Reopening Committee will look into a large-screen TV for the future, depending on whether printed bulletins continue to be preferred.
- The ushers will maintain a list of names of church service attendees each week. These lists will be locked in the safe in the church office for 30 days, after which the lists will be destroyed. The lists will be used for the exclusive purpose of Covid-19 contact tracing when required by civil authority, higher church council, and/or SPC Session. No other use or release is authorized. Requests for the lists and authorization to release the lists must be submitted in writing to the Clerk of Session.

Worship

- The Reopening Committee will look into options for increased holiday attendance, including additional services and advance reservations.
- In accordance with current recommendations on exposure time, efforts will be made to ensure that the service does not exceed 45 minutes.

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- The Reopening Committee is looking into disposable microphone sleeves for services where speakers/liturgists must share microphones, e.g. Christmas.
- Worshipers should limit drinks to bottled water or beverages in travel mugs with secure lids. SPC will not provide bottled water.
- Baptisms may be held with all parties wearing masks, but the walk around the Sanctuary will be omitted.
- Installations and ordinations may take place, but the laying on of hands will be omitted.
- Pre-packaged Communion kits containing wafers and juice will be provided by SPC. Worshipers who require gluten-free wafers or who prefer wine will be encouraged to bring their own in their personal Worship Kits. The kits will be placed in a basket at the entrance.
- Scripture readings will be printed in the bulletin.
- The service will be recorded for broadcast on the radio, posted online, and emailed to worshipers.

Music

- No congregational singing will occur. Alternatives to singing will be developed (recorded performances, joint readings, etc.).
- Special music will be performed by soloists and small groups at the proper social distance.
- The circle will be held outdoors at the end of the service.

Dismissal

- Usher will dismiss worshipers by row/group after service. Each row will be dismissed after the previous group has left the Narthex.
- Offering plates will be set on small tables at the exit. Worshipers will also be encouraged to donate online. Money counting procedures will be set by the office staff/finance committee.
- Worshipers will be encouraged to maintain social distancing in the parking lot – no socializing, hugging, shaking hands, etc.

Cleaning

- Trash receptacles will be provided outside the exit for masks and wipes.
- Hymnals and Bibles have been removed from the pews during the initial deep cleaning. They will remain in storage.
- Because the pew cushions are sprayed with sanitizer, they will stay in place.
- Steve has developed a plan for weekly cleaning.
- Restrooms will be available, but worshipers will be encouraged in the guidelines to use their own facilities at home before coming to church. Signage and wipes will be provided to direct visitors to wipe down all surfaces before exiting. A trash receptacle will be placed outside.
- The doors to the CE building will be propped open to minimize exposure on handles. Rooms and resources in the CE building should be used at a minimum, if at all, to reduce the burden of cleaning.

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Church Life

- No Sunday School will be held. The Reopening Committee is looking into online options for children.
- Children must remain with their family/guardians while on the property and will not be permitted to roam the grounds or buildings.
- No indoor social events may be held. Outdoor events must be socially distanced.
- Committees should continue to meet remotely to avoid additional cleaning demands in the buildings.
- Rev. Hawk will work with appropriate advisors to develop procedures for congregational care, home visits, etc.
- The Reopening Committee will work with appropriate committee chairs to develop procedures for projects such as the rummage sale and food bank.
- Special events such as funerals and weddings, when held by SPC, will follow the same social distancing guidelines as for worship. Presbyterian Women, when providing a funeral meal, will follow proper distancing guidelines during food prep and service.
- For special events by outside groups, including the hostel program, SPC's obligation is to provide a sanitized facility. However, SPC is not responsible for making sure outside groups follow guidelines during their event. Agreements have been amended to state that SPC cannot be held liable if groups do not follow proper social distancing procedures from the CDC and PA Health Dept.
- For the hostel program, only one group per weekend will be scheduled, as cleaning between groups would be too much of a burden on SPC.
- The Reopening Committee believes that procedures for SPC office staff and B&G activities, e.g. building repairs, do not need to be addressed, as social distancing guidelines are already being followed.