

Title	Returning to Worship guidelines during COVID-19 pandemic.
Effective Date	7/8/2020
Approved by	Darlington Immanuel Church of Christ Church Council
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Purpose

The following guidelines will be recommended during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure safety measures are in place for in house worship and other church functions.

Worship Service Guidelines

- 1) Each church attendee are highly encouraged to take their temperature before attending any IUCC church function. If the attendee temperature is above 100.4 Fahrenheit or experiencing any symptoms they should not attend worship or any other church function. Symptoms per the CDC guidelines include but not limited to:
 - a) Fever
 - b) Cough
 - c) Shortness of breath
 - d) Fatigue
 - e) Muscle or body aches
 - f) Headache
 - g) New loss of taste or smell
 - h) Sore throat
 - i) Congestion or runny nose
 - j) Nausea or Vomiting
 - k) Diarrhea
- 2) The Church Council encourages those at high risk to COVID-19 to use other options for receiving worship such as radio and written worship.
 - a) High risk individuals includes per the CDC are but not limited to:
 - i) **Older Adults:** The greatest risk for severe illness from COVID-19 is among those aged 85 or older.
 - ii) **Underlying Medical Conditions:** People of any age with certain underlying medical conditions are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. The following conditions **are at increased risk** of severe illness from COVID:
 - a. Chronic kidney disease
 - b. COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
 - c. Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
 - d. Obesity (body mass index (BMI) of 30 or higher
 - e. Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies.
 - f. Sickle cell disease

- g. Type 2 diabetes mellitus
- iii) People with the following conditions **might be at an increased risk** for severe illness from COVID-19:
 - a. Asthma (moderate to severe)
 - b. Cerebrovascular disease
 - c. Cystic fibrosis
 - d. Hypertension or high blood pressure
 - e. Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines.
 - f. Neurologic conditions, such as dementia
 - g. Liver disease
 - h. Pregnancy
 - i. Pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung disease)
 - j. Smoking
 - k. Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)
 - l. Type 1 diabetes mellitus
- 3) Anyone that has been exposed to COVID-19 is highly encouraged not to enter the church building and to stay home and self-monitor and follow CDC guidelines if symptoms develop.
- 4) Anyone that has tested positive should not enter the church building until they have met the CDC criteria to discontinue isolation.
- 5) A protective mask covering the mouth and nose is highly encouraged. Exceptions are for children under 2, anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, and anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.
- 6) Seating will be reduced to allow for Social Distancing that will include marked pews for nonuse (encouraging every other row scenario).
- 7) Only immediate families that live in the same household should sit together.
- 8) Only the pastor is allowed at the pulpit and reading stand.
- 9) No singing will be allowed. Music will be shared thru other means.
- 10) Greetings are encouraged not thru physical contact.
- 11) Passing of the peace will be conducted in manners that do not require physical contact: a verbal greeting, a unison spoken response, or other gestures such as a smile or bow.
- 12) Hymnals and Bibles will be removed.
- 13) Hand sanitizer will be available and highly encouraged to use before entering church sanctuary.
- 14) Communion if offered will be provided in communal kits and available when exiting worship.
- 15) Church offering can be dropped at the back of church in a designated location or electronically or via mail.
- 16) Greeters, readers and ushers as previously assigned for the month will not be needed.

17) Children should not be left unattended.

18) A church member will be available to help with the following during worship:

1. Opening the Church door for each person entering.
2. Encouraging those entering church to use hand sanitizer.
3. Reminding each person of new seating arrangements.
4. Open doors at end of service and dismiss each pew individually to maintain proper distance.
5. Lighting the candles.

Food and Beverages

- 1) No food or beverages will be allowed.
- 2) Coffee hour will not take place until further notice.

Funeral Services

- 1) Funeral Services will be discussed on a case by case basis and in coordination with the funeral home.

Weddings

- 1) Weddings will be considered and may be dependent of number in attendance.

Building Use

- 1) Fellowship Hall, the kitchen and the basement will not be available for use during church worship.
- 2) The bathroom should only be used on as needed basis. EPA cleaning wipes will be available to wipe down surfaces after use as needed..
- 3) No rental agreement for building use will be approved until further notice. (exceptions: weddings and funerals)
- 4) Only the minister and necessary church staff will be allowed in the Pastor office.

School and Confirmation

- 1) Adult Sunday school will be postponed until further notice due to the age of most of those in attendance.
- 2) Regular Sunday school will be dependent on State of WI Schools guidelines and on teaching availability. A separate policy will be created once school re-opens if needed.
- 3) Confirmation classes may continue only thru electronic means. The Confirmation ceremony will be conducted after all classes are finalized. A separate worship may need to be held to allow for confirmation students, their parents and guests and some members of the church to accept the class.

Council Meetings

- 1) The council will meet in fellowship hall, maintain social distancing and are encouraged to wear a protective mask covering their mouth and nose.

Cleaning Protocols

- 1) Church will be cleaned prior to each worship service or event.

- 2) Housekeeping will refer to separate document on cleaning and disinfecting during COVID-19 pandemic.

Plan for when a staff member or congregant becomes sick

- 1) Anyone who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 will be removed to another location in church away from others.
- 2) This area will be closed off until after proper cleaning and disinfection
- 3) If the sick individual must have their own method of transportation to leave the facility. If too sick to leave 911 will be called to assist.
- 4) Local health officials will be notified if a person diagnosed with COVID-19 has been identified and in the facility.
- 5) All staff and congregants will be notified about potential exposure while maintaining confidentiality of the person's identity.

Notification of policy

- 1) Members will be notified of this policy thru the monthly newsletter and posted on the IUCC website. A copy will also be posted in the church entry.

Pastoral Visits

- 1) The pastor will be hold virtual visits by phone or online as needed. Hospital or Nursing home visits will be considered on a case by case basis dependent on the policy of those institutions.

Resources

<https://www.wcucc.org/coronavirus-resources-for-churches/considerations-for-returning-to-church/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>