Adams United Methodist Re-opening Plan

August 2020

As we return to gathering for worship, we want to be safe and healthy. This means we will have to change our behavior so we will protect the most vulnerable among us. Here below are some guidelines to prepare for the time we will resume worship together.

Cleaning

* Clean frequently touched surfaces with a disinfectant cleaner. We will begin by using Lysol cleaner.
* Common surfaces areas to be cleaned are light switches, bathroom fixtures, backs and arm rests of pews, stair rails, doorknob, crash bars…
  + In the office, the desk, the copier, and the chairs need to be wiped down
* Areas in the building to be cleaned weekly include but are not limited to the narthex, sanctuary, halls, bathroom, children’s room, and as we open for meetings that Walton room will become included as will tables and chairs for wipe downs.

Cleaning after using the building

* We will wait three days after service in order to ensure the most safety
* We will use the cleaning protocol sheet and focus on the above areas each week

Cleaning accountability

* A cleaning log will be kept in the office and needs to be signed and dated.

* General cleaning will be done after every service by the cleaning crew. Individuals or outside groups using the building between services will clean the area after themselves and log their name and date.

Building

* We need to keep a log of those in the building during the week. If you enter the building during the week there is a log by each entrance. If you are in the building for longer than 10 minutes please sign in with your name, date, and location that you are in. You also need to wipe down the common touch surfaces on the way out.
* If you are dropping something off in the building our one dropoff location is the office. Use the front door and leave it in the office.

Preparing for people to gather for church

1. **Before you leave home** take stock of your well-being and over-all health. Do you have a cough, sore throat, body aches, runny nose or fever? Take your temperature before leaving the house; if it is elevated, or you have any corona virus symptoms, please stay home, and call your doctor as soon as you can.
2. **Welcome to church**. When you arrive, you will be asked if you took your temperature and was it in the normal range. You may be asked if you have exhibited any symptoms of coronavirus in the past 24 hours. If you have a temp, or symptoms you will be asked to go home and seek medical attention. While we want you to be with us, we also care about the safety of our most vulnerable members and need to keep everyone as safe as possible.
3. **Social distancing must always be practiced**  – keep 6 feet apart at all time unless you live in the same household.
4. **No physical contact, please**. As Ecclesiastes 3:5 says: “*There is a time to refrain from embracing*.” We must for a time **refrain from physical contact** which includes hugs, handshakes, kissing and even elbow bumps, waving, air hugs, and jazz hands of excitement are all good though!
5. **Face coverings will be worn by anyone over 2 unless they have a medical condition.** The church has on hand masks for those who forget to bring theirs. We do not want a forgotten mask to exclude anyone. We also have some cloth ones made by members for those who need them. But if someone refuses to wear a mask you will be asked to leave – we have chosen to be a community who looks out for those who are more vulnerable and this is one way we live that out.
6. **Seating arrangements:** Seating is spaced by safe social distancing practices (Individuals must sit 6 feet apart unless they live in the same household). Families may sit together but maintain safe social distance from the next individual or family group. Each person in any family group counts as an individual in the over-all count for attendance.
7. **Hand sanitizer** is necessary on the way into the building and is available on the way out before you remove your mask. It is one of the requirements by the state, but also ensures that any germs that may have been picked up on hand rails on the way into the building stop at the door and before the pew, especially on communion Sundays.
8. **Hand washing** is available in every bathroom and when meeting rooms are open in the meeting rooms. Please be sure to spend 20 seconds (or about the time it takes to say the Lord’s prayer) when washing your hands.
9. **Worship service occupancy**: Worship attendance is limited to 33% of the occupation of the worship area by the NYS Health Department. This is as of June 6, 2020; watch for updates on all rules and guidelines for gatherings as changes may occur moving forward into the recovery.
10. **Maintaining occupancy limits**: Although everyone wants to come together to have   
    church again, we will have to, for safety reasons, set limits of 33% of occupancy as of June 24, 2020. Between social distancing and the occupancy limits, Adams church can have about 50 people in a service for Sunday worship. Numbers will be reached on a “first come, first served” basis. Although we want all people to come, we will have to turn people away when capacity is reached. These limits are set for the safety of all our congregants. If you are not able to attend on the day you wish, please, come the next Sunday for worship. This is not ideal, but God willing, we will be able to gather without restrictions soon.
11. **Keeping attendance records**: In the past we have kept records of who attends church   
    on Sunday by simply counting people on the way in. Now we need to keep records to have contact lists in the event someone among our attendees becomes ill with Covid-19. This information will not be shared with anyone outside the church unless it is necessary to protect the health and wellbeing of our members and our community. If tracking for an incident of Covid-19 exposure is needed, these lists will help to identify people who may need testing. If there is no need the information will be shredded. We will not share your information and apologize for the inconvenience.

Preparing for Worship Services

1. it is a deeply personal choice for you where you worship and that it is okay no matter where you choose to worship (from home or in the building). Our community has intentionally chosen to be a community that is all about Worshiping God, Loving All, and Serving the World and we do that whether the building is closed or not. There are no boundaries on our mission. Do what you need to do. Only you can make that decision for you and your family. The re-opening the building team has intentionally and deliberately chosen to keep on-line worship going so that no one is left behind. We continue with our snail mail of written sermons to those who do not have the technology. We are community whether we are in a pew or in our living rooms. Church is the space where we worship, we grow in our discipleship together in our small groups and we serve the world in our ministries (making masks, sending cards, checking on people, making blankets, sorting clothes, preparing bins for Red Bird). All these things continue no matter what the setting is (no matter where our bodies are located). Prayers for all. Online worship will continue for those who will not be able of feel safe attending church and for new people who have begun to worship with us online.
2. Worshiping in-person: There are many people who are part of making our church feel like a welcoming and safe place; these include –

Greeters: our greeters want to be welcoming, but also be careful about their own safety. Greeters will wear masks and those distributing items will wear gloves; attendees are to wear masks. Again, please remember you must wear a mask, do not shake hands, hug or kiss, or even elbow bump people when entering church. Greet people with a wave, a bow, a prayerful hand gesture. The greeter will ask you the questions about exposure, and your contact info if it has changed. People should not congregate in the entry area. Conversations are best carried on in the parking lot, outside in the open air, and at a socially safe distance (in this case “parking lot conversations” are encouraged). Designated seats are marked with sticky notes. Do not sit in the taped off rows.

Music: At this time, we are not going to have in person music. If you play a non-woodwind, or brass instrument and would like to share your talent with us during worship, we would love to have that! If you would like to pre-record something, we can incorporate that as well. Sue Gamet and Mike Tyo have been doing amazing things with our music.

Bibles and hymnals: Bibles and hymnals will be removed from the pews. Please feel free to bring your own from home or use the screens as the words will be on the screen.

Offering: The offering will not be made by passing the plate. There will be a basket in a convenient location to drop off offerings. At the beginning of worship, the greeter will bring the basket to the front as church begins, and the offering prayer will be made at the appropriate place in the worship service. Gloves will be worn by the counting team to count the money after church. Please feel free to give as you have been giving you send a check by mail monthly.

Coffee hours: Will be on hold until further notice. The time will be determined by the availability of a vaccine or upon further recommendations by the NYS Health Department, UNYUMC Annual Conference, and/or local Boards of Health. Right now, we are unable to meet in this capacity.

Communion: Remember, participation in communion is voluntary. If you are uncomfortable with the physical part of communion, partake in the spiritual and community presence of participating in the communion liturgy. Prayerfully engage in communion with the congregation whether you choose to partake or not. We have purchased self-contained communion units right now for this time. We will take time to give clear instructions to the congregation before communion is celebrated.

Baptisms: We will devise a plan as the need arises.

Weddings: We will devise a plan per the situation.

Funerals: It is recommended that funerals are held at graveside until further notice and limited to immediate family members. Social distancing, the wearing of masks and hygiene practices will be followed (plans are under construction for future gathering recommendations, more information to come)

Other considerations –

How do we deal with the situation if a person tests positive in our congregation after we have begun to meet again?

Everyone who was in the building on the day the exposure took place will be

notified and instructed to contact their doctor’s office. The building will be closed

for 24 hours, then sanitizing cleaning will be done before people will be allowed

to gather again. (See NYS guidelines for ideas). We will then have remote worship for two weeks to reduce risk of exposure to anyone else.

What about Sunday School start up in the fall?

We are working on this.

Communication of plans and practices: please check back to our website and Facebook page for updates as well as our YouTube channel.

Please note: These guidelines are very fluid. The restrictions and recommendations change often. Watch the news, check emails and the Adams UMC Facebook page for updates. We will make changes as they become known to us.

Back in the Building Team