

Woodlawn Chapel Presbyterian Church

A Congregational Plan to be the Church and the Body of Christ during Covid-19

While sheltering at home during this unprecedented time we hold images of Woodlawn members united and celebrating the pandemic's end. We hope for a sanctuary full of laughter and greetings mixed with the comfort of worship. Yet, we know, the return to in-person ministry must be gradual and carefully planned.

We know that for the foreseeable future COVID-19 will dictate our visions and reality. The Session has developed the following plan consisting of a set of Good Faith Conditions and defined stages to guide our re-entry. We will move through these stages based on guidance from national, state and local sources as well as the specific needs of the Woodlawn congregation.

Good Faith Conditions:

1. High risk individuals (people over 60 and those with underlying health conditions) should feel comfortable and be supported to shelter at home during all stages.
2. Social distancing and use of face masks will be required whenever at church to protect all. Additionally, all attendees will monitor their own wellness, never attending if symptomatic or if they have knowingly been exposed to anyone with symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19. Best hygiene practices should always be followed, including no-touch greetings, collection of offering and distribution of communion elements as well as the suspension of group singing and any/all practices that increase touch or the spread of potentially infectious respiratory droplets.
3. The building will be cleaned regularly and between user groups with special attention to high-touch surfaces. Proper supplies will be available for those who are involved in the cleaning. Hand sanitizer and masks (for individuals that forget theirs) will be available once services resume. Bathroom and kitchen procedures will be clearly defined and posted. Session approval is required for all building use.
4. Fluidity between these stages will be essential and be based upon full communication between members, Session, and our county per current reality and the well-being of all.
5. The criteria for moving between stages will include: Declining case counts, availability of testing, contact tracing, vaccine, and data and recommendations from government agencies regarding gatherings.
6. In each stage, the church's ministry will continue. As outlined in the Book of Order, the Session leads the church's witness. worship, outreach, pastoral care and Christian education will continue as outlined in the defined stages listed below.
7. This is a living document that will be updated as new information is learned and new ideas are shared.

As this congregation begins to resume public activities, please know that we present these stages based upon careful discussion and discernment, with an abundance of caution and concern for all, and especially for those who are most vulnerable. We will continue to make decisions based upon the best scientific knowledge at our disposal, in the spirit of constant prayer, and with full trust in the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Sincerely,
Woodlawn Chapel Session Members

Safer at Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online worship services (variety of platforms) • Online Bible studies and all meetings (via Zoom) • Mothers' Day Out cancelled • Office closed with minimal staff operations • Encourage electronic/mailed giving • Outreach by membership committee via phone contact • No building use
Stage One	<p>At the lifting of the stay-at-home order by St. Louis County, Woodlawn will operate as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue holding online worship services only • Bible studies and meetings continue to meet online • Limited office functions to ensure essential operations • Encourage electronic/mailed giving • Life rituals (weddings, funerals, confirmations, baptisms) not held in the sanctuary.
Stage Two	<p>Following several weeks of improving conditions throughout our community and adhering strictly to our Good Faith Conditions, WCPC would operate as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person worship to resume in some format outdoors. • Online worship continues • Masks and social distancing required for all activities inside or outside the building • No greeters/ushers, congregational singing or fellowship following service • No nursery or children/youth Sunday School so parents are encouraged to bring tablets with headphones or other quiet activities for their children • Bible studies and small group meetings could take place at church in approved designated area based on social distancing criteria • Life rituals with small family groupings allowed under direction of our pastor/Session.
Stage Three	<p>After further documented improvements in community health conditions and adhering strictly to our Good Faith Conditions, WCPC would operate as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person worship moves to sanctuary with socially distanced seating. Social distancing requirements communicated via email and with signage. • Online worship continues • Masks and social distancing required for all activities inside or outside the building • No greeters/ushers, congregational singing or fellowship following service • No nursery or children/youth Sunday School so parents are encouraged to bring tablets with headphones or other quiet activities for their children • Bible studies and small group meetings continue at church and online for inclusivity as needed. Masks required and meetings to be held in the sanctuary so social distancing can be practiced. • Office functions resume as normal • Life rituals limited to numbers that can maintain defined social distancing requirements.
Stage Four	<p>This would be an eventual return to most previous practices once data and direction are sufficient to ensure the safety of all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face masks per individual preference, sanitizer available • Group singing resumes • No group size limitations, social time resumes, ushers/greeters return • Continue online service options • Resume Mother's Day Out per Rockwood calendar and early childhood guidelines • Building use opened to the community (polling place, neighborhood meetings, etc.)

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Suggested Operational Procedures and Planning Considerations

Safer at Home Specifics

- Explore a method to gather attendance information on those that are joining virtually -- members and those that are new to Woodlawn. Identify members of Woodlawn who are not joining virtually and reach out to these folks
- Establish a team that can work with members who are having technology issues in joining worship
- Mission projects continue: e.g. Circle of Concern, Mother's Day Packages for Ronald McDonald House, Baby Shower, Shopping for Shut-ins

Stage One Specifics

- Explore establishing small groups (6-8) that meet via Zoom Groups (or in person) on a regular basis (some evening, some daytime) for reflection, prayer and fellowship. Leaders might be current pastors, retired pastors, lay leader or even have leaderless groups.
- Outline formal and informal ways to establish and maintain regular communication with members, being transparent in how decisions are being made and on the basis of what resources are available.
- Explore options to offer online children's programming weekly and this summer (VBS)

Pre-Planning needed to move to in-person outside worship options and holding small meetings inside

- Diagram seating options for services around the pavilion
- Small group worship might be an alternative to explore
- Prepare for risk-reduction measures in the church building such as increased sanitation/cleaning and hygiene
- Identify a plan for managing the flow of folks as they gather (maintaining social distancing)
- Identify parking areas for those that will remain in their cars for outdoor worship and instruct ushers on procedures
- Secure speaker system needed
- Prepare posters to position around the church that list the symptoms of the virus and risk factors asking folks that fit the criteria to respectfully leave and stay home
- Make sure that the following items are available: hand sanitizer, gloves, masks, wipes, etc. for use by those in small groups
- Map out areas in the church that would be approved for small group meetings
- Investigate technology needed to allow for streaming of small groups

Stage Two Specifics (Outside worship, some in-building meetings)

- Have available hand sanitizer, face masks, sanitizing wipes (prefer individuals provide own when possible)
- Have a plan to disinfect surfaces as needed before, during and after meetings
- If the services are outside, encourage participants to bring their own chairs or blankets
- Identify parking spots that can be used by those that prefer to stay in their cars

- Depending on the outside temperature, move the Sunday Service to an earlier morning time or an early evening
- When meetings are held in the building, identify a person in charge of cleaning and sanitizing areas before and after the meeting (e.g. door knobs, tables). Prop doors open
- Acknowledging that air conditioning, sealed windows within a small place increase the risk of virus transmission, set standards for meetings in the library or youth room that minimize risk
- Encourage participants to wear face masks, required for in-door meetings.
- Establish no-touch practices for greeting each other (bowing, American Sign Language, etc.)
- Establish ways for no-hands collection of the offering (baskets or a box placed at the entrance and exit locations. Offering counters should wear gloves when in contact with the money/checks.
- Use pre-packaged communion elements or ask that participants bring their own

Pre-Planning needed to move to in-person options inside

- Outline a sanctuary seating chart that allows for social distancing
- As there will be no printed bulletins available, look at options to project worship components, upcoming events, etc.
- Contact the Presbytery for recommendations for serving Communion
- Identify a plan for managing the flow of folks as they enter the sanctuary to maintain social distancing
- Acknowledging that air conditioning, sealed windows within a small place increase the risk of virus transmission, set standards for meetings in the library or youth room that minimize risk
- Explore safe and appropriate ways to conduct the service of communion in a way that allows for physical distancing and reduces close contact (limit the number of people coming into contact with the elements as they are prepared and served, ask servers to sanitize their hands immediately before distributing the elements; doing so in view of the congregation may help in reducing anxiety, let the bread be given by the server to the worshiper and continue using small cups of prepared juice or use pre-packaged elements)

Stage Three Specifics (Worship in the Sanctuary and more activities in the building)

- Remove Bibles, hymnals and sign-in books and store until it is safe to have these out.
- Establish a plan to get contact information from visitors for follow up (i.e., instead of friendship pads.)
- Establish a door to enter and a door to exit. Prop doors open during worship.
- Suspend the use of the nursery due to the difficulty of sanitizing all surfaces and items.
- Encourage the wearing of face masks while at church
- Continue to offer online options for those that don't feel comfortable in attending in-person. Respect their decision
- Groups, teams and committees meet in person while, in some cases, still offering the online option
- Put a team in place to regularly sanitize and clean areas of the church before and after church