

New WPC Pandemic Protocol Guidelines

effective May 27, 2021

General Principles

- In determining level of participation and degree of pandemic protection measures, each person and each child's parent/guardian need to follow through on what seems best for each one's situation.
- The WPC Session has been and continues to use the CDC and the ODH as our main sources for guidance in the pandemic. According to rules and guidelines released in May 2021, most restrictions which pertain to church activities will be lifted by June 2, 2021, such as:
 - Those who are fully vaccinated are no longer required to wear masks or maintain social distancing in most settings.
 - Capacity restrictions for large-group settings have been lifted.
 - Persons who are not vaccinated continue to be urged to wear masks and maintain social distancing.

These new WPC guidelines address these most recent changes. As circumstances change, we will continue to respond as appropriate.

- As restrictions are lifted, it is clear that no single option for church activities fits all needs. One size does not fit all; in fact, even three sizes do not fit all.
- We are "members one of another" (Romans 12.5). It is critical that WPC members find ways periodically through the summer (and as their activity increases generally) to feel connected to one another as WPC members.
- Our community is based on trust.
- It can be valuable to reduce the stress of change by taking it gradually.
- Protective measures will appropriately increase as:
 - the degree of anonymity of group members increases. (E.g. How likely is it that participants are unknown to one another and/or to leadership?).
 - as the likelihood that participants are not fully vaccinated--or are in some other way more vulnerable to COVID--increases. (E.g. How many children do we hope to see in this event?)
- Additional factors affecting the course of ministries and potential pace of change this summer include: four construction projects underway in the building, the arrival and assimilation of at least five new staff members, and the normal stretch of absences due to staff members' vacations (many of which were not taken last summer).
- The wellbeing and future of our congregation depend on each member's commitment to forbearance. This is a time of high stress and continuing uncertainty. Kindness goes a long way as we all seek to be wise and caring.

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Guidelines Regarding Contact (Touch)

- Sanitizing stations will be maintained at each entrance to the building, as well as several locations within the building.
- All persons, regardless of vaccination status, are recommended to use hand sanitizer on entering and exiting the building.
- Doorknobs, handrails, restrooms, and other high frequency contact surfaces will be cleaned with disinfectant on a daily basis.
- Staff members will model and encourage alternatives to hand-shaking and hugging.
- “Passing” items (e.g. offering, communion trays) will be avoided, wherever possible.
- While food and beverages may be served both inside and outside, the criteria for set-up is to ensure that food and beverages are protected from exposure to or handling by multiple guests. Buffets, for instance, are not appropriate at present, unless every portion is individually wrapped.

Guidelines Regarding Social Distance and Capacity

- The wide range of perspectives and levels of risk make this category quite complex. No solution is likely to satisfy everyone; therefore, we will seek to provide, over the course of the summer, a variety of options for gathering.
- Worship will continue to be livestreamed for remote participation.
- Plans for in-person gathering need to take into account the General Principles described above.
- For worship and large, public gatherings: Gradually increase to full capacity and discontinue reservation system. Consider ways to support those who wish to come, but prefer to maintain some distancing. Consider outdoor service possibilities.
- For smaller groups: For committees, Sunday school classes, and other groups with an essentially “known” membership, we recommend that the leader engage participants, reminding them of the current guidelines and discovering the most amenable method of gathering. Staff members can support this process.
- For non-WPC groups (A.A., PEO, etc.). These groups may meet in the building as per the guidelines of this document. We recommend the Fellowship Hall receive a careful cleaning the day after A.A. meets.

Guidelines regarding masks

- The use of facial coverings is the most controversial and personal aspect of the pandemic protocols. Patience and forbearance are especially key here.
- It is always okay to wear a mask.
- We prefer that speakers not be masked while speaking.
- Adults and children/teenagers (age 12 and above) who are not fully vaccinated are expected to wear a mask, as per CDC guidelines.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for children under age 12 regarding mask-wearing.