

## **Weddings at Covenant During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

July 2020

As we make difficult and faithful decisions about how and when to reopen our campus and resume weddings at Covenant, we remember we are called to love God and love neighbor. Decisions that may feel uncomfortable to some are rooted in the intrinsic relationship between love of God and love of neighbor that undergird our determination to keep our staff and congregation safe during the pandemic.

These guidelines were developed by the Reopening Task Group of Elders appointed by the Session, with input from the Covenant Wedding Committee. In undertaking this work, the Reopening Task Group consulted with medical and infectious disease experts in the congregation. They ultimately decided it is most responsible and in keeping with our love of God and neighbor that rules at Covenant will likely be more stringent than state guidelines.

This is a living document. As Covenant leadership monitors public health trends for the Corona virus, it may be updated by the Reopening Task Group.

### **Weddings**

- As of the date of this document, weddings may be held in the sanctuary or the Welcome Center with a maximum of 25 people present (other than Covenant staff) or in the Chapel or the Parlor with a maximum of 10 people present (other than Covenant staff).
- The limit on numbers of people who may be present will be reevaluated when campus fully re-opens to staff and/or in-person worship services resume and state-ordered limits on numbers at indoor gatherings are modified. As noted above, Covenant's rules may be more strict than those ordered by the state.

### **Wedding Guests**

- Persons present on campus must wear masks at all times when they are inside a building on the Covenant campus and also when outdoors when they are unable to remain 6' away from others.
- Couples will be asked to submit a family seating chart before the wedding to facilitate family seating.
- The first three rows of pews will be left vacant and two pews will be left vacant between all non-household groups of guests.
- Guests will be escorted to/from seats beginning front-to-back and back-to-front when exiting, using the center aisle only.

## **Wedding Ceremony**

- Music may be offered by soloists or non-wind instrumentalists, placed so that safe distances can be maintained between them and all other persons. A vocal soloist must be placed so that he/she is at least 15' away from other persons while singing without a mask.
- Bulletins, pew hymnals and Bibles, and pens/pencils may not be used.
- Congregational singing may not occur.
- Communion may not be offered.

## **Wedding Party**

- The wedding party must wear face coverings at all times while inside and maintain at least 6' distance from other persons.
- The wedding party may arrive no more than 1 ½ hours and no less than one hour before the wedding ceremony. The wedding party includes the couple, their attendants, and immediate family members.
- The dressing area off the Chapel narthex may be used by the bride and one other designated person before the wedding. Other members of the wedding party are asked to arrive at the church dressed and ready for the service.
- Members of the wedding party may assemble before the ceremony in the Chapel and/or a conference room in the Welcome Center.
- During the processional, ceremony, and recessional, members of the wedding party (except for the couple), and all other persons participating in the wedding ceremony (including Covenant and non-Covenant staff) must maintain at least 6' distance from one another.
- If children are part of the wedding party, they must be able to maintain appropriate distances from other persons or be accompanied by a household member to assist them.
- The couple is not required to wear masks while saying their vows.

## **Photographers/Videographers/Wedding Photos/Florists**

- Photographers and videographers must wear masks while inside buildings on campus.
- Florists delivering flowers or others assisting in placing flowers in the sanctuary must wear face coverings while inside the church.
- Photographs of the wedding party may be taken inside the church. For group photos of people who are not members of the same household, the participants must wear masks and maintain at least 6' distance from one another. For photos of members of the same household, the participants may be closer than 6', but must wear face masks.
- Photographs may be taken inside the sanctuary only after the wedding ceremony.
- Photographs of large groups may occur only outside. Participants must wear face masks if they are closer than 6' to one another.

## **Pre-Wedding Tours**

- Until further notice, pre-wedding tours with prospective couples will be conducted virtually by the Covenant wedding coordinator.