

Guidelines for Re-Gathering

Jesus said, “*You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.*” Staying as safe as possible by social distancing, wearing masks, and not gathering in person for worship during this pandemic are ways that we have shown that we love our neighbors.

After much discussion, and with the knowledge that, even with the strictest procedures, it is impossible to guarantee that someone will not contract Covid 19 from an in-person worship service or activity, the St. Luke’s United Church of Christ’s Council has adopted the following guidelines for the initial process of re-gathering for in-person worship:

1. We acknowledge that these guidelines may feel like “too much” for some people and “not enough” for others. Please decide what you are comfortable with.
2. All services will continue to be live streamed on Facebook and posted on YouTube (after the service). Live streams will also continue to have hosts, comments, posting of the readings, etc. We will do the best we can to maintain the quality that we have become accustomed to.
3. Each individual and/or family has the responsibility to evaluate their own health, their own risk factors, and their own comfort level to determine if in-person or virtual worship is appropriate for them.
4. If you or anyone in your family feels ill or if you have reason to believe you have been exposed to Covid 19, or any other communicable disease, please stay home. You are invited to worship virtually.
5. Until further notice, there will be no in-person Sunday School. This will be reevaluated before the regular fall session.
6. Per City of Independence current Public Health Advisory, we strongly encourage you to wear a mask while visiting indoor public places, no matter your vaccination status. If you do not have a mask and want one, it will be provided for you.
7. Hand sanitizer will be provided at all entrances.
8. Social distancing should be practiced at all times. We ask that you refrain from personal contact including shaking hands and hugging.
 - a. During worship we ask that you keep 6 feet between family groups. Please sit on opposite ends of the pews, keeping 2 pews between you and the next family/individual.

- b. Time will be provided for socializing, before and after worship, in the Fellowship Hall. We ask that you keep 6 feet apart.
 - c. We ask that there be no gathering of groups in the hallway or Narthex as a way to help reduce congestion in these areas and to allow for social distancing.
- 9. An easy to access and read bulletin will be available on the website. A limited number of bulletins will be printed for those that do not have smart phones or tablets.
- 10. Offering plates will not be passed. There will be a container at the back of the sanctuary for in person offering and electronic offerings will continue through the GivePlus app.
- 11. Singing will be permitted with the awareness of social distancing for the comfort of others in worship.
- 12. Different elements of communion will be tested for ease of use and inclusiveness.
- 13. If families are comfortable doing so, children will be invited to come forward and sit, socially distanced, in designated spots, for Children's Moment.
- 14. Funerals will be held at the pastor's discretion using the same protocols as have been designated for worship.
- 15. Outside groups – No outside groups will be allowed at this time. Since quilters are mainly members and are a small, vaccinated group, they may resume weekly gathering.
- 16. Pastor Paul will evaluate greeting people at the back of the sanctuary each week. It is requested that you exit the sanctuary, keeping plenty of space between families/individuals.