

# **Phase 1 Worship Attendance Protocols, Principles, and Procedures**

Dear Aldersgate family,

Like so many churches across the United States, we have sorely missed being together on Sundays. While the live stream broadcast has been good and even very good at times, there is simply nothing like seeing each other and worshipping God together as the body of Christ. The earliest models of church worship had people gathering together face-to-face and Aldersgate United Methodist Church is eager to resume in person worship with a single service model to start.

The first Sunday of in person worship will be at **11:00 AM** on **November 8, 2020**, and will be conducted in a safe and responsible manner and in coordination with state and local government and health guidelines. This document will be reviewed weekly and amendments, where necessary, will be made. Please note, the live stream broadcast through Facebook and YouTube will continue.

To that end, we are instituting a phased plan which follows the latest guidance from the CDC, our denomination, state officials, and which, at the same time, respects our traditions. We believe that public worship can take place safely in an era of social distancing. To ensure that we meet those guidelines, we will be operating at 25% capacity or 160 people.

Our plan for Phase 1 includes the following:

## **Underlying protocols/principles**

Individuals will perform a self-assessment at home with the questionnaire below. Those who are excluded via the questions may not attend. While we believe we are putting into place every possible measure to protect our Aldersgate family, those who are immunocompromised should consider the highly infectious nature of COVID-19, but will not be excluded.

**Question 1-**Do you have any of the following symptoms: body temperature 100.4 or greater, cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, sore throat, vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, headache/congestion/runny nose with no known underlying cause (such as seasonal or chronic allergies), fatigue, or new loss of smell or taste?

If NO, proceed to question 3.

If YES (for body temperature of 100.4 or higher, etc.), or you are otherwise symptomatic and considered at risk for COVID-19 exposure and you have not taken a COVID-19 test, you may not attend worship. A negative COVID-19 test result or 14 days being symptom-free without medication is required to attend worship. If you have taken a COVID-19 test, proceed to question 2.

If YES, but symptoms have a known cause (asthma, COPD, chronic sinusitis, etc.), you may attend worship.

**Question 2-**Was the result of the COVID-19 test positive (meaning you have COVID-19)?

If NO (meaning you don't have COVID-19), you must be symptom-free for 14 days before attending worship.

If YES, you should isolate at home. You may attend worship upon obtaining a negative COVID-19 test result and you are symptom-free.

**Question 3-**Have you been in close contact (e.g., within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19 infection?

If NO, you may attend church.

If YES, you will be restricted from attending worship for 14 days from the time you were exposed to confirmed COVID-19. If a COVID-19 test is performed with a negative result, you will still be restricted from attending worship until the end of the 14-day period to see if symptoms develop. If no symptoms develop during the 14 day period, you are permitted to attend worship.

Note that a negative test is relevant for the point in time at which the test was taken. It does not mean the staff or student will not develop COVID-19 in the future.

For your safety and the safety of the congregation and for contact tracing, reservations must be made each week in order to attend worship. We will be providing an online system, as well as, taking calls in the office to reserve your seats. **Reservations can be made up until 11 AM each Sunday.**

Masks, for all people over the age of 2 per CDC guidelines, must be worn at all times while in the building and should be put on before arriving at the door. There will be a supply of masks available in the event that someone neglects to bring one.

Families/Individuals must maintain at least 6 feet between them and another family/individual at all times.

Pews in the sanctuary are cordoned off so that only every other pew will be used. There will also be an unused portion in the center of each pew, thereby keeping worshippers at least 6 feet apart. Families may sit together. The first 2 pews will not be used thereby creating plenty of space between participants and worshippers.

The nursery will not be available for the time being, nor will activity bags for children. The Children's Message, when provided, will not include inviting children to come forward.

Fellowship/Coffee will not be offered at this time.

### **Procedures**

Please allow sufficient time for arrival procedures; the church doors will open at 10:40 AM. Only the main glass doors and the Fairfax doors will be used for entry and exit except in the case of an emergency.

Please be on time, as only the Fairfax doors with the ramp will be left open for late arrivals after 11:05 AM.

The church's entrance doors, when the weather is cooperative, will be propped open to limit contact with door handles. The main glass doors will be open at 10:40 AM for arrival and remain open until 11:05 AM, and will similarly be propped open at departure time until everyone has exited. The Fairfax doors where the ramp is located will be open at 10:40 AM for arrival and will be available for late arrivals during the worship service.

Immediately upon entry, each individual's temperature will be taken by a Greeter. Anyone registering over 100.4, per CDC guidelines, will not be permitted to enter. Signage will be displayed supporting this.

Hand sanitizing stations will be placed just inside the entrance and must be used upon entry and exit.

Families/Individuals will make their way to the narthex and be given direction by an usher as to which door to use to enter the sanctuary. Doors will be labeled 1, 2, and 3 for clarity.

The narthex will also have tables/stations where families/individuals can deposit their offering, and on communion Sundays, obtain a prepackaged communion element set.

Bulletins, if provided, will be placed in pews in advance of the service, and worshippers are asked to take them home. Members may prefer to access the bulletin electronically on their own devices.

During the service, the custodian will sanitize surfaces that have been touched by those entering the building, including, but not limited to, handrails and door handles.

The custodian will also be monitoring the restrooms and will sanitize the restroom in the event that it is used. However, it would be helpful if you could use the restroom at home before arriving.

Families/Individuals will exit the sanctuary from the rear to the front maintaining at least 6 feet between them. The usher will guide this process. It is expected that members will refrain from socializing indoors at the conclusion of worship.

### **Worship protocol**

All participants in worship will be spaced at least 6 feet from one another and will wear a mask when not performing their role.

Passing of the Peace will not be a part of the worship service. While handshakes, hugs, and high fives will be absent from the worship service, friendly gestures will be encouraged.

Singing and responsive elements can only take place with a mask on and should be done softly.

When Communion is part of a worship service, distribution of the elements will take place in the narthex. Members will get a prepackaged communion element set upon arrival, to be reserved until the appropriate time during worship.

Our Director of Music and others will fulfill the role of a cantor, but a choir, as we are accustomed to, will not be used.

The worship services will be designed to conclude within an hour, yet will include the usual elements of our worship tradition.

Sunday worship services will continue to be shared live through Facebook and YouTube.

Songs, lessons, and other liturgical materials will also be shared through screens in the sanctuary, which promises to visually enhance our worship experience and provide opportunities for worship engagement, in light of the restrictions and limitations imposed by COVID-19.

### **Emergency procedures**

In the event of an emergency requiring members to exit the building, all sanctuary doors and building exterior doors are available.

In the event that an individual/family needs to exit the sanctuary during the worship service, an Usher will assist to ensure that disruptions are minimized.

### **Supplies on hand**

Two touchless thermometers

Three stand hand sanitizer dispensers

One backpack misting sanitizer

### **Needs for each Sunday**

Two Greeters

Three ushers

Susan Schranck will be the Registrar to facilitate contact tracing

Ron Romine will be our custodian on Sundays