

**Protocols for Re-opening Our Church for
Sunday Worship Service and Outside User Groups
(June 7, 2020 version)**

WIPC Session recognizes the unique challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic in trying to balance the very real need for ministry at this time while maintaining a safe, healthy house of worship for all. Our church family is not unlike others. Many in our congregation are “huggers” and others not so much. While many are excited to return indoors for regular worship service, others may be very anxious and prefer to not return until a treatment or vaccine is widely available. Some will wear masks and others will not. Some are in the middle.

What is very clear, however, is that we all share a goal of loving Jesus Christ, sharing His gospel, and caring for one another. We all need to respect the position of others and individually do what we can to protect the health and safety of our entire church family. WIPC Session has developed these interim guidelines to promote the safe re-opening of our church and to minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19 virus within our facility, amongst our congregation, and/or any other groups using our facilities. It is important for all to recognize that while we will all strive to *minimize* these risks, it is simply not possible to *eliminate* the risks entirely. Thus, it is imperative that we all work together, collectively follow these protocols to ensure health and safety for all, and that each of us make decisions in the best interest of ourselves and our loved ones.

The following protocols have been carefully developed using best available guidelines and emerging best practices for re-opening houses of worship during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the protocols follow the “Revised Texas Guidance for Houses of Worship During the COVID-19 Crisis” in addition to relevant guidance documents from the US Center for Disease Control (CDC), shown below.

These protocols will be reviewed by Session periodically and modified as needed, as circumstances dictate and/or new best practices are identified.

References:

Revised Texas Guidance for Houses of Worship During the COVID-19 Crisis

<https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/images/admin/2020/Press/Revised%20Guidance%20for%20Houses%20of%20Worship%20During%20the%20COVID-19%20Crisis%20-%20Final.pdf>

CDC Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), May 2020

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

CDC Interim Guidance for Administrators and Leaders of Community- and Faith-Based Organizations to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), May 23, 2020

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/guidance-community-faith-organizations.html>

West Isle Presbyterian Church **Page 2 of 3**
Protocols for Re-opening Our Church facility for
Sunday Worship Service
(June 7, 2020 version)

1. If you have **experienced any symptoms, mild or severe, or have been in contact** with other people that have these symptoms, we ask that you stay home and watch the services online.
2. State and local agencies encourage **all persons who are 65 and above and or have underlying at-risk health conditions** to stay home and watch the services online or listen to FM 89.1 broadcast from our parking lot
3. **Hand sanitizer, tissues, and no-touch trash cans** will be available throughout the sanctuary.
4. **All childcare and children's Sunday school will remain closed** until further notice.
5. **Fellowship Hall, the Kitchen, Nursery room, the pastor's office and associated common areas in the back building (including restrooms) will be closed** before, during and after service, and limited to staff members only until further notice. The restroom near the entrance of the sanctuary will remain available at all times.
6. All attendees are asked to **sanitize their hands and to consider donning a mask** before entering the building.
7. **Ushers and greeters will wear gloves and masks and practice hands off greeting** with respect to social distancing. **Registration information will be collected** by an Usher upon entry.
8. **Seating within the sanctuary has been modified** to maintain social distancing of 6+ feet which reduces our "safe" capacity for attendees. Should our "safe" capacity be exceeded, we encourage late arrivals to join the service via our parking lot live radio broadcast feed on FM 89.1.
9. **Ushers will seat each party of attendees** with their family unit using social distancing of 6+ feet between each unit. **Those wearing masks, and those choosing not to, will be seated in separate areas of the sanctuary.**
10. Attendees are strongly encouraged to **cover coughs and sneezes** with a tissue or your forearm.
11. During the initial re-opening **phases, the use of pew Bibles, Hymnals, and Worship guides have been temporarily discontinued**, pending further notice. We will make maximum use of our TV monitors. We encourage personal bible use if desired.
12. When re-introduced, **sacraments will be administered in a way in which attendees will not touch** the same surfaces and objects.
13. We will **dismiss attendees by row and family unit, maintaining social distancing.**
14. **After-service fellowship must occur outdoors** in the parking lot while maintaining social distance. **Hands off greetings and fellowship** is strongly encouraged.
15. We will refrain from passing collection plates and instead provide a **central collection receptacle** such as a basket in the building. **Online giving** is always encouraged.
16. Community areas will be cleaned and sanitized **frequently**, including all furniture, doors, doorknobs, handrails, light switches, and restroom surfaces. All Air Conditioner filters have been upgraded to improve air quality throughout the facility.

West Isle Presbyterian Church **Page 3 of 3**
Protocols for Re-opening Our Church and
Facility Use by Outside User Groups
(June 7, 2020 version)

1. Use of our WIPC facilities by outside user groups will be **limited to our “back building” facilities** including Fellowship Hall, the Kitchen area and adjacent restrooms only.
2. Our **sanctuary and nursery room and office are closed** to outside groups for sanitary reasons and the additional cleaning requirements that would be necessary if open.
3. Group participants **must use the side entrance** to Fellowship Hall for all entry and exit.
4. Group members /participants that have **experienced any symptoms** mild or severe, or been in contact with other people that have these symptoms, should not attend or use our facilities.
5. State and local agencies encourage all participants who are **65 and above and or who have underlying at-risk health conditions** to avoid attending group meetings.
6. Each group is required to **maintain an attendance list** for each meeting, and to notify appropriate Health authorities and WIPC immediately **should a participant test positive** for the virus.
7. All participants are asked to **sanitize their hands** and consider donning a mask before entering the building.
8. **Hand sanitizer, tissues, and no-touch trash cans** will be available at the side entrance and throughout the kitchen, Fellowship Hall, and restrooms.
9. **Seating and tables** within Fellowship Hall should be modified by the group to meet the needs of individual Group users but must maintain appropriate social distancing of 6+ feet.
10. Attendees are strongly encouraged to **cover coughs and sneezes** with a tissue or your forearm.
11. When meetings are concluded, it is the **responsibility of each User Group to thoroughly sanitize the areas used** including all chairs, tables, and common touch points such as doorknobs, handrails, light switches, and all restroom surfaces.
12. **Cleaning and disinfectant supplies** (wipes, sprays, paper towels) may be available on a limited basis. However, given our limited supplies, we would ask that User Groups please bring or donate additional cleaning supplies to help sanitize the areas used.
13. We ask that participants of each User Group please respect our facility and the protocols we have developed for safe use by all. Please clean and sanitize the area as if your life, or that of others, depended on it.... clearly, it does.
14. Thank you, and **may God bless you richly!**
15. Acknowledgement and liability waiver:

The undersigned , representing the group or organization intending to use portions of the West Isle Presbyterian Church (WIPC) facility, **agrees to abide with the above protocols and that WIPC will not be held liable** for any COVID -19 or related health issues and their broader impact of any occupant/attendee of this group or organization.

Group or organization name and signature of representative with date