



First United Methodist Church

100 Green Street NE, Wilson, NC 27893
Post Office Box 1423, Wilson, NC 27894-1423
Phone 252.237.6121 • fumcwilson.org

Soon after we suspended Sunday services in our sanctuary, Bob put together a team of Church members and staff members to develop a plan to restore worship services in the safest, most expedient method possible.

In late June, this team developed a comprehensive plan for reopening in early July. However, a spike in Covid 19 cases caused the Governor to extend phase II restrictions and the Bishop to advise against in person worship. It was a difficult, but unanimous decision of our group to delay our reopening.

We have continued to meet and refine our reopening plans. We are excited to announce the team has approved plans for resuming worship for our Contemporary Service and Traditional service on September 6th. In addition, plans have been approved for the reopening of our Preschool on September 1st and a structured learning environment for Elementary School-aged Children's program on August 24th. We have decided to delay the opening of Sunday School until we have had a few weeks of experience with our current plan.

The health and safety of the children we serve, the members of our congregation and the staff of our church must be our primary concern. In order to meet this obligation, we have identified a number of safety measures. Lorie Daniel has published the Safety guidelines for the preschool and has plans to share this information with all parents and staff members. Vickie Franks has also developed the safety protocols for the Elementary grade program.

For our worship services, there are a number of safety precautions that have been taken that may not be evident to you, or require your participation, such as the sanitizing of pews and other "high touch" surfaces, the sanitizing of restrooms and removal of items such as Bibles and Hymnals. However, there are some safety precautions that will require your participation and cooperation. Listed below is a summary of these safety measures:

- In order to comply with the Governor's guidelines of Phase II, facemasks will be required. If you forget to bring yours, one will be supplied to you at the entrance.
- Seating capacity will be limited to 60 for the Contemporary Service and 120 for the Traditional Service. Due to this limitation, it will be necessary to make a reservation for you and your family members. This can either be done on-line or by calling the church office. The Church will begin accepting reservations for the September 6th service on Monday, August 31st. If you are unable to make a reservation due to capacity restraints, you will be given a reservation for the next Sunday you wish to attend.

- In order to maintain social distancing in the sanctuary, only certain pew areas will be available for seating. Therefore, once all the reservations have been received, the Church Staff will assign each person a seat. All members of your family will be able to sit together. When you arrive at the Church, ushers will guide you to your assigned seat.
- Nursery service will be available on a limited basis for newborns to three year olds. You must indicate your need for nursery service when making your reservation to ensure the nursery is properly staffed.
- In the Contemporary service, chairs will be placed in positions to maintain social distancing.
- There will be music during the service, but the congregation will not participate in the singing of hymns.
- Collection plates will not be passed. They will be placed in several places around the perimeter of the pews.
- Direct physical contact with persons other than your family members is discouraged.
- At the conclusion of the service the congregation will be dismissed pew by pew at the direction of the ushers.

We are all very excited at the prospect of worshipping in person in our beautiful church. The Reopening committee has worked very hard to get us to this point. And, while reopening has been a challenge, our bigger challenge will be staying open! With your cooperation, we are hopeful we can continue to worship together in this manner and look forward to the day when we can greet each other in Church with an embrace and hand shake.

If you have any questions about these guidelines, please feel free to call the church office for clarification.

God Bless you.

Nancy Owens – Church Council Chairperson
Lawrence Bradley – District lay Leader
Hearn Walston – Staff Parish Relations Chairperson