

Eastern Parkway United Methodist Church

Visitor's Guide

Updated October 2021

What are your COVID protocols?

EPUMC will continue to adjust its protocols in response to changes in community infection rates and vaccine availability in combination with state and Federal guidelines. Please refer to our website homepage for current protocols. Other COVID-related changes are noted in this guide.

Where is the church located?

At the corner of Palmer Avenue and Eastern Parkway, 1 block off Union Street, in Schenectady, NY.

When are Sunday services?

The service begins at 10:00 a.m. and lasts about an hour.

Where do I park?

The entrance to the church parking lot is on Eastern Parkway; this lot includes access to the ramp and elevator. There is also street parking on Palmer Avenue and Eastern Parkway.

Where do I enter the church?

There are four entrances. The main entrance (under the bell tower) faces Eastern Parkway. There are two entrances off the church parking lot: a ramp and elevator entrance and a smaller door leading to a short set of stairs. There is also an entrance facing Palmer Avenue if you park on that side of the building. If you use the elevator, you will enter at the front of the sanctuary; otherwise, you will enter through the narthex at the back of the sanctuary.

An usher will greet you and offer you a bulletin.* You are welcome to sit wherever you like.

**Note: Use of printed bulletins has been suspended during the pandemic.*

What should I wear?

Wear whatever you are comfortable in. On any given Sunday, a range of dress styles will be on display in our congregation, from blue jeans and shorts to khakis and skirts to dresses and an occasional tie.

Do you have hearing assists?

We use microphones for the service and all announcements, which are linked to small portable handsets. When you enter the sanctuary please let an usher know you'd like one. EPUMC does not have an induction loop.

What will happen during the service?

During the service, the order of worship printed in the bulletin,* as well as the words to the hymns and Bible readings, will be projected on the walls at the front of the sanctuary. At no time will you be expected to know or recite anything from memory.

**Note: Use of printed bulletins has been suspended during the pandemic.*

The pastor will begin the service by welcoming everyone, including visitors, but you will not be asked to stand or otherwise identify yourself publicly. Attendance pads will be passed down the pews; you are invited to enter your name and other information, if you wish.*

**Note: Use of attendance pads has been suspended during the pandemic.*

While there might be some variations from week to week, the service typically includes the following components.

Music: The congregation will be invited to sing several hymns. You may wish to use the hymnals in the pew racks (especially if you read music) or follow the words that are projected on the wall. Hymns with three-digit numbers are in the hardcover hymnal, and four-digit hymns are in the softcover, spiral-bound hymnal. The hymns will be accompanied by organ or piano or occasionally by our "house band." In addition, the Chancel Choir usually performs an anthem and, from time to time, members of the congregation share their musical talents with an instrumental or vocal solo. The choir and musicians have respectfully asked that the congregation not applaud after their performances.

Prayer: There is a communal prayer of confession early in the service, led by the Lay Reader. Later in the service the congregation is invited to recite the Lord's Prayer, with the words projected. This is followed by a pastoral prayer given by the pastor. There are prayer cards in the pew racks. If you have a prayer request, you are invited to fill out a card and place it in the offering plate. Your request can be anonymous. If you so designate on the card, the pastor will read your request aloud during the pastoral prayer.

Offering: A monetary offering to support the operations and ministries of the church is taken up every Sunday. An usher will come by your pew with a collection plate. As a visitor and our guest, your presence is your gift. Contributions of any amount are welcome and appreciated, but do not feel any obligation. Also, as mentioned above, if you have a prayer request, place the card in the offering plate at this time.

Bible readings: There is usually one reading, read by the Lay Reader.

Sermon: The pastor will deliver a message based on the Bible reading.

Communion: On the first Sunday of the month, the sacrament of Holy Communion is offered.*

** Note: During the pandemic, the ushers will distribute sealed containers with juice and a wafer to the congregation in the pews.*

Benediction and Postlude: The service closes with a blessing from the pastor and a musical postlude, usually played by our Music Director/Organist. You are asked to enjoy the music in an attitude of quiet meditation. When the postlude concludes, you may greet the pastor at the back of the sanctuary, and join us for refreshments if you wish, in the narthex, behind the sanctuary.*

**Note: The hospitality time in the narthex has been suspended during the pandemic.*

Is there nursery care?

Yes. Our nursery is staffed from 9:45 to 11:15 a.m. by an adult who has been hired by the church and passed a background check. The nursery is located in the education wing; an usher can give you directions. The ushers periodically check in with the nursery attendant during the service. Of course, you are welcome to keep your infant or young child with you in the sanctuary during the service, if you prefer.

Are there restrooms available?

Yes. The restrooms are at the beginning of the education wing hallway, very near the sanctuary. Feel free to use the restroom during the service. There are additional restrooms on the lower level, accessible by elevator or by stairs. Lower-level restrooms are fully wheelchair accessible. Main floor restrooms have grab-bars but do not have wide doors.

What will happen after worship?

For adults (and older youth who may be interested), there is a book study in the Hearth Room starting at 11:15 a.m. The Hearth Room is at the end of the hallway

that runs parallel to the sanctuary. A range of books have been discussed, including books of the Bible and works of theology and personal spirituality. Each book is studied over several weeks, but each session will be self-contained so that people who have not attended the previous sessions or have not read the book can still participate and have a meaningful experience.

On the fourth Sunday of the month, our community works together in the narthex to make 200 sandwiches for the guests of Bethesda House. Congregants are invited to bring sliced deli meats and cheese. Bread, disposable gloves, and sandwich bags are all provided. If you're a visitor, this is a fun way to get to know some of the folks in our community.*

**Note: During COVID, the sandwich making has been suspended, but on the fourth Sunday we still collect donated deli items, which are delivered to Bethesda House along with bread purchased by the church.*

EPUMC is a proud member of the [Reconciling Ministries Network](#) of the United Methodist Church. Our community affirms the sacred worth of persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities and welcomes them into full participation in the fellowship, membership, ministries, and leadership of the congregation.

We hope you will come see us!