

June 29, 2020

Dear Mentor UMC members and friends,

Thank you for your on-going prayers, and continued support of our church's ministry during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has been a difficult season for all of us.

As we begin to relaunch the ministries within our facility we have developed the following document to guide us. Our staff, and Administrative Council have engaged in conversation. We have been in consultation with others to develop strategy that will help us safely open our facility. I ask that you dedicate time to read all of the guidelines to avoid confusion. Please consider:

- This is a proposed roadmap. It is based on the best information available at this time. Since the COVID-19 pandemic is a fluid situation, there may need to be adjustments as we move forward. Please be prepared for those changes, up to and including the potential for a second building closure if necessary.
- We will ask all persons to follow the guidelines when they enter our building. We recognize that people are at various levels of comfort. We will expect all persons to comply to the guidelines so that all will feel safe and welcomed. This will enable us to remain focused on our mission to help lead all onto a path of Christ-centered discipleship. Be assured, countless hours, conversations, research, and prayer have happened to develop a plan in the best interest of our Mentor UMC family.
- Returning to our facility will require sacrifice. Things will not be as they were. In order to reopen our doors, we will all be asked to embrace a new way of doing things. Thank you for your willingness to embrace the guidelines with grace and understanding. Your sacrifice, acceptance, and patience will impact all.
- We care about you, and encourage you to stay home if you are uncomfortable returning to our facility at this time. Although we are working hard to comply with all recommendations, we cannot eliminate every risk factor.

The COVID-19 crisis has pushed us into a new reality. Yet the ministry of our church has continued. We look forward to once again gathering together in the same space! However, it is vital that we balance our need to gather with our need to care for one another in a safe manner. Ultimately, the most important thing is that we continue to grow in Christ and offer Christ to our community and world.

Determining the best path forward for our building usage is constantly before me. I love you, and care deeply about your health. I believe as we seek Christ together, and sacrifice for one another, many will recognize God at work among us. May it be so.

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Sondra Snode

## **Mentor United Methodist Church Building Reopen Strategy**

This document has been thoughtfully and prayerfully developed to assist with the relaunching of ministry within our facility. Thank you for your investment in our shared ministry.

### **Introduction**

- I. We honor the sacrifices made by our Mentor UMC family since worship at our facility was first moved to on-line only, March 15, 2020. Following the cautionary measures set forth by the State of Ohio, as well as Bishop Tracy Malone, you have modeled Jesus' command to place the needs of others ahead of your own.
- II. The Mentor UMC "Building Reopen Strategy" is a proposed roadmap for reopening. Nothing in this document is to be considered absolute. Close monitoring of the COVID-19 crisis will continue, and detours may occur as we move forward. This may include the need to once again close the facility if necessary.
- III. The "Building Reopen Strategy" is based on mutual trust, and the expectation that everyone will follow the set-forth guidelines. For the good of all, everyone who enters our facility will follow the guidelines to the best of their abilities.
- IV. We will extend grace to those entrusted with the implementation and monitoring of the guidelines.
- V. For those who will not comply to our guidelines when entering our facility, an alternate means for worship and fellowship will be offered and required.
- VI. Those considered to be "at risk" are encouraged to continue to stay home and worship on-line. This includes the elderly, those with compromised health, anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms or a temperature  $\geq 100.4$ .

**IF YOU ARE ILL – STAY HOME AND WORSHIP ON-LINE**

**IF YOU ARE AT RISK OF ILLNESS – PLEASE WORSHIP ON-LINE**

## **Initial Phase History**

Beginning March 15, 2020 worship began on-line only, as a blended service.

*This service will continue until such a time as it is determined other worship opportunities are in place.*

All in-house meetings and groups were cancelled until further notice.

All office volunteers were asked to stay home until further notice.

Staff began rotating office hours, and maintaining proper social distancing while in the building.

Children's ministry began on-line with daily lessons

Ministry for youth, as well as the confirmation class, switched to on-line forums

Journey Groups began meeting on-line

Congregational Care expanded to include call check-ins to congregants

## **Phase One** Beginning May 4, 2020

*Groups of 10 or less may schedule a gathering at the church facility*

All gatherings must be approved by the church office

(only one gathering will be scheduled at the same time)

Gatherings will take place in either Wesley or Asbury, as assigned

Participants must practice social distancing of at least 6 feet

The meeting room cannot be rearranged

All participants must wear a mask

The group leader will wipe down used surfaces at end of gathering:

tables, door handles, light switches

On-line groups will continue to be encouraged to meet, including committees, and Journey Groups.

As we return to in-house worship, entering our building will be different YET YOU CAN EXPECT THAT: Worship will center on glorifying God and offering a meaningful experience for all who attend. Worship will include music, prayers, and the preached Word. Downloading our church app (look for Mentor United Methodist Church in the App Store or Google Play) will provide a bulletin and a study guide for the sermon. If desired, persons are encouraged to bring their own bibles or utilize a Bible app.

**Phase Two** Beginning July 12, 2020

***In-house worship resumes with the following guidelines:***

- a. Initially there will be 2 worship services offered in-house:  
Sunday: 9 a.m. Modern Worship in Fellowship Hall  
11 a.m. Traditional Worship in Sanctuary  
On-line worship will continue to be streamed at 9 and 11 on our church website, YouTube channel, and Facebook page. The service will then be posted on each venue for viewing at other times.
- b. Persons are asked to register for services through “Sign-up Genius” on our website: [www.mentorunc.org](http://www.mentorunc.org), through our church app; or by calling the church office: 440-255-3496
- c. Capacity in each worship space will be monitored. If capacity is reached, persons will be asked to move to a different space. (Pre-registration will help monitor the number of attendees, as well as track attendance.)
- d. While in the building, everyone age 4 or older must wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth. Those who do not have a mask will be provided one. Those unable to wear a mask are considered “at risk” themselves and to other worshipers. “At risk” persons are asked to continue to worship on-line.
- e. Congregants are asked to maintain a minimum of 6 feet from others at all times – when entering the building and worship space, as well as when exiting the building, and in the parking lot. Seating in our services will be configured with social distance in mind. (Family members are considered a group, and will sit together.)
- f. Traffic flow in hallways, as well as for entering and exiting worship spaces will be clearly marked.
- g. Congregants will be asked to refrain from shaking hands, sharing the peace, and from interacting in ways that alter proper social distancing.
- h. There will be no congregational singing until it is safe to do so.
- i. There will be no fellowship hour until further notice.
- j. There will be no childcare or children or youth classes offered in-house until further notice. On-line connections will continue. Families are welcome to attend worship but will worship together in the services.
- k. Offering Boxes will be available at each exit for envelopes and prayer cards.
- l. Dismissal after worship services will occur row by row, following the designated traffic patterns established within the building.
- m. Bathroom usage will be limited to one person at a time (children and a parent will be considered one unit and be together)

## Communion

Beginning in August, communion will be available in the Chapel on Sundays

The elements will be individually prepared and ready

Persons will enter the main chapel entrance and exit per the side hallway

On-line “blessing of the elements” will continue for a short time

Persons will be able to bring their own elements on communion Sundays

## **Phase Three**      DATE HAS NOT BEEN DETERMINED

Additional in-house worship services will be offered.

- This can only occur once proper cleaning supplies have been obtained. Initially, we cannot adequately insure spaces are disinfected quickly enough for additional services to occur on Sunday mornings.

- Alternate times will be considered

For instance, Thursday night worship could return.

Or another time to gather for worship will be considered should there be interest and commitment.

## Live Streaming Traditional and Modern Services

- Cameras have been ordered for both worship spaces
- Computers and software have been purchased for use in both spaces
- Tech-Team members are being recruited, and will be trained.

Eventually, the on-line service will move away from being blended and instead, be live-streamed from both spaces.

## Singing

- Initially, we are not singing due to the recommendation of numerous sources. We will continue to monitor and base decisions on data received. We look forward to a time when our choirs can return, and congregational singing can resume.