

Recommendations of the Re-Entry Task Force for St. Paul's United Methodist Church

Written June 15, 2020

Summary Only

(See Complete Report for more details!)

1. TIMELINE

The guidelines from the Iowa United Methodist Church (IAUMC) and those from the Linn County Health Department (LCHD) for communities of faith are similar.

IAUMC	LCHD
Red Light	Closed Status
Yellow Light	Phase 1
Yellow Light	Phase 2
Green Light	Phase 3

As of June 12, 2020, Linn County has achieved Phase 2 status. If we are aligning ourselves with LCHD, this would indicate that **we are in Yellow Status, Phase 2.**

St. Paul's plans to continue with Sunday morning online-only worship through the end of July, at which time we will reassess. We're planning a few group opportunities outside and inside this summer, all with pre-registration required. We recognize that anything held outside the church building is probably safer than inside. At any time, health metrics may change our status.

Neither LCHD nor IAUMC recommends full opening with business as usual activities until a vaccine is available. This is the definition of Phase 3 or Green Light status.

Neither LCHD nor IAUMC recommends in-person participation of high-risk people defined as anyone over 65, anyone with underlying conditions, or anyone with exposure to or positive test to COVID 19 in the last 14 days in any of the reentry activities. If you are over 65, we encourage you to participate in the life of St. Paul's through online methods or other alternatives (such as from the safety of your car). However, we recognize the choice is for each individual to make.

2. STANDARDS for OPENING St. Paul's UMC OFFICE

Our church building doors will remain closed, until such time as a vaccine is available (Phase 3). Anything entry prior to that will require ringing the doorbell or entering by way of a Door Greeter. Face masks will be required and disposable masks will be made available for anyone who does not have their own. We'll need to have you log in too.

In order to minimize risks or exposure or transmission, some of our staff are working from home. They will have daily temperatures taken and wear face masks when working outside their individual office or cubicle. Plexiglas will be added in some areas.

3. SMALL GROUP MEETINGS INSIDE THE CHURCH

We still encourage online gatherings when possible, but when this is not appropriate or possible, then, a meeting may be scheduled through the office staff. Food isn't allowed in meetings. Chairs will be set for social distancing and face masks will be required. Pre-registration is needed and Event Registration sheets must be completed and returned to the office at the end of the event.

4. IN-PERSON WORSHIP INSIDE SANCTUARY (and as it pertains to any worship in Wesley Center or Chapel)

When we determine we are ready to offer Sunday worship services inside, several elements will be needed for us to provide as physically safe an experience as possible. We are considering an August 2nd in-person worship option but we'll continue to watch health statistics. Here's what we'll need to require of all of us:

Plan to wear a face mask. Pre-registration is required for your pre-assigned, staggered arrival times in order to avoid crowds entering at the same time and to pre-assigned seating. Everyone will use the main entrance on the 2nd Avenue side. Temperatures will be taken upon your arrival. Your assigned seating in the Sanctuary will be based on number in your family, with acceptable social distancing guidelines followed. Pre-registration is required through the office the week prior. We will allow a few spaces reserved for guests who may attend. Hymnals, Bibles, attendance pads, giving envelopes will be removed from the pews. Congregational singing and congregational spoken responses will not happen. Humming to oneself while a song leader sings is okay. Holy Communion will not be offered during this time. Offerings will be collected at the doorway or other safe ways of collection. Staggered departure times will help us avoid congestion.

5. OUTDOOR GATHERINGS onsite (Parking lots, green spaces) and St. Paul's UMC MINISTRY OFF-SITE GATHERINGS (Driveways, back yards, campfires, etc.)

Small groups are encouraged to meet at an outside location. This may include at the church, a park, or a member's home. The Iowa Department of Public Health guidance supports this recommendation. Watch for a calendar of some new July ministry events including parking lot and grassy area connection opportunities. Sign-up will be required for participation. Our St. Paul's playground is not available for use at this time.