

Being Church While We Prepare to Reopen

FUMC's Reopening Task Force has drafted a series of Steps (see below) to guide our planning and actions as we look to reopen our building and gather again. In the meantime, I offer you the following as a guide to what each and all of us can do to remain the church together.

What You Can Do Now:

In the spirit of the three simple rules, do no harm, do good, stay in love with God, consider the following as ways that we can be the church together during this time:

Do No Harm

- Follow social distancing, masking, and hygiene guidelines. For many, COVID-19 is asymptomatic, and the best way to stop the spread is to assume that you are contagious and could contribute to the spread.

Do Good

- Financially support our church. The financial circumstances of many of us have changed. If you cannot fulfill in 2020 what you pledged in the fall of 2019, don't worry. The world has changed, and we will all change with it. Every financial contribution to FUMC makes our ministry possible. (Mail: 31 W. Church St. Fairport, NY 1440) (online: www.fairportumc.org)
- Continue to reach out to one another with phone calls, emails, and letters. I know how uplifting it is when someone tells me about a note or a phone call they received, so I can only imagine how uplifting it felt to receive it.

Stay in Love with God

- If you do not have access to the internet and would like to stay connected with FUMC please let us know so that we can add you to our weekly mailing list.
- Connect with FUMC online. You can join us for worship by clicking the link to YouTube in our Sunday email or at the post on our Facebook page and website. You can watch our worship videos at whatever time is convenient for you.
- In addition to Sunday Mornings, the weekly email goes out every Tuesday with a video greeting from Pastor Richelle or a member of the church. The Tuesday email includes all the announcements for the week and an updated Prayer List.
- Be in prayer for our community and world. COVID-19 has affected us all in ways we couldn't imagine. Pray for those who have lost their jobs. Pray for those who work in hospitals and care facilities. Pray for every essential employee, from delivery drivers, to garbage people, to grocery store custodians. Pray for our church staff.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support. If you have any questions, please let me know. It is because of your prayers and support, both financial and relational, that we have been able to make a difference in our community.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Richelle

Steps for Reopening FUMC Updated effective September 23, 2020

As many of us have returned in recent months to work sites, schools, and other venues, community exposure to COVID may increase. Therefore, we encourage everyone to continue to use virtual options for meetings, worship, and other gatherings whenever possible. Doing so will help reduce exposure to COVID-19 as well as to flu and other seasonal ailments. The point is not just to protect ourselves, but to protect others in our community, and to preserve our health care system's capacity to care for the many needs of our community.

- All activities are subject to safety protocols, including but not limited to restricted capacity, masking, required training in hygiene, cleaning, disinfection.
- These steps are subject to change as we learn and adjust in these challenging times.
- We are guided by John Wesley's Three Simple Rules: Do No Harm, Do Good, and Stay in Love with God.
- Wherever used below, "church-sponsored" means initiated by staff or volunteers for ministry-related purposes.

Step 1

- *Except as described below*, all church-sponsored ministry gatherings, activities, and worship remain virtual
- Off-site pastoral activities, such as baptisms, funeral services, marriage services, are at the discretion of the Pastor
- Staff and key leaders may access the church building for limited purposes.
- Church members who deliver masks, food, and other items for outreach ministry (such as St. Francis Center, St. Joseph's House of Hospitality) are encouraged to keep a log of their activities for contact tracing purposes.
- We encourage our adult church members who choose to meet or socialize off-site with others, whether fellow church members or not, to follow state and local health and safety guidelines, including keeping dated attendance logs for contact tracing. A guide you may follow is below: *Guidance for Safer Gatherings Off-Site*

Step 2 (Current)

- *Except as described below*, as well as anything permitted in previous steps, all church-sponsored ministry activities, gatherings, and worship remain virtual.
- Staff and key leaders may access the church building for limited purposes.
- With prior planning, consultation, and approval by the Children's Ministry and/or Youth Ministry Support Team, the Pastor, and the Reopening Task Force, outdoor (whether on-site or off-site) children and youth gatherings may be held, subject to limits on attendance, duration, and other safety requirements. (Written plan required: see below.)
- With prior planning, consultation, and approval of the Pastor and the Reopening Task Force, outdoor on-site adult gatherings may be held, subject to limits on attendance, duration, and other safety requirements. (Written plan required: see below.) (Note: We continue to encourage adults who choose to gather in person off-site, whether as part of a small-group or to socialize, to follow the *Guidance for Safer Gatherings Off-Site at a minimum. See below.*)

- Written plans for children, youth, or adult gatherings (as above), including safety protocols, should be submitted to the Reopening Task Force as early as possible, but no later than 7 days before the proposed event. We recommend that plans include alternative dates.
- Reopening Task Force begins training of staff and volunteers in reopening safety and hospitality protocols.
- After prior consultation with FUMC Trustees and Reopening Task Force, businesses that rent space at FUMC may resume operations (at a date agreed to) following their NYS Safety Plans and in accord with FUMC's Safety Plan.

Step 3 (Date to be determined)

- Pastor and/or Church Council Chair files required Affirmation with New York State that FUMC is prepared and able to meet all the state's minimum requirements for reopening, with Safety Plan prominently posted.
- Staff may resume office hours.
- Volunteers trained in safety protocols who are approved by the Pastor may return to the church building for specific purposes.
- *Except as described below*, as well as anything permitted in previous steps, all church-sponsored ministry activities, gatherings, and Sunday worship remain virtual.
- Brief, 30-minute or less on-site worship service, with limited attendance, may be held by the Pastor and staff to test reservation system and safety and hospitality protocols.
- With prior approval by the Reopening Task Force, a reservation through the church office, and prior training in FUMC safety protocols, adult small groups may begin to meet on-site. Rooms available, capacity, and duration of meetings will be restricted.
- With prior planning, consultation with, and approval by the Reopening Task Force, Sunday Dinner Ministry may resume preparing meals for home delivery.
- Outside groups that wish to resume meeting at FUMC must be approved by the Pastor and Reopening Task Force. They will be subject to space and capacity limits and adherence to safety protocols.
- Limited music ministry activities may begin on-site as determined by the Music Director and the Reopening Task Force.

Step 4 (Date to be determined)

- In-person Sunday worship resumes with one service. Capacity restricted using reservation system. Service recorded for on-line viewing.
- No nursery.
- Church-sponsored ministry activities and gatherings, including those for children and youth, will continue to include virtual options.
- Limited on-site adult small group options, as in Step 3.
- Limited on-site Sunday School and youth activities may begin as determined by the Pastor, staff, Youth Ministry Support Team, and the Reopening Task Force.
- Limited music ministry activities may begin (or continue) on-site as determined by the Music Director and the Reopening Task Force.

Step 5 (Date to be determined)

- Full on-site Sunday worship, church-based activities, gatherings, and ministries resume.

Fairport UMC Reopening Task Force
Guidance for Safer Gatherings Off-Site

We cannot restrict what individuals do at their own property or in a public space. If you gather a small group at your own homes or at a public space, we encourage you to follow these guidelines *at a minimum*:

1. Meet outdoors.
2. We suggest that your gathering be no larger than 10 (that includes the hosts); the actual number depends on your ability to keep people *at least* 6 feet apart in all directions (the area of a circle, or ~113 square feet per person*). (Persons who already are sheltering together, e.g., parents and children, may sit closer, but they are still counted toward the number 10.)
3. Hosts/leaders prepare a *dated* attendance sheet, where all attendees print their full name, address, phone number. The host should retain this attendance sheet for potential tracking and tracing needs by the Department of Health.
4. Everyone wears a mask at all times. The mask must cover the nose, mouth, and chin. If someone arrives without a mask, they should leave. (Or the host can supply a clean mask.)
5. No sharing of food or beverages. Everyone brings their own.
6. Host provides hand sanitizer or requires attendees to bring their own.
7. Limit your time together. (We suggest an hour or less.)
8. No sharing of books or printed materials. Everyone brings their own.
9. Singing, chanting, yelling, are very risky. For music, play non-wind instruments, or hum.
10. The host should clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs and bathrooms before and after the gathering.

Helpful information from the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth Biology Professor Erin Bromage is here: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/22/well/live/coronavirus-pandemic-memorial-day-picnics-bbqs.html> (access is free to all of the NYT COVID coverage)

*See, e.g.,

https://www.usfa.fema.gov/coronavirus/planning_response/occupancy_social_distancing.html and <https://covid19.colorado.gov/safer-at-home/social-distancing-calculator-for-indoor-and-outdoor-events> To enable folks to safely move between others, Colorado uses a 12-foot grid (roughly 144 sq ft/person). As noted there, a distance of only 6 feet between persons cannot be maintained if any of them moves (hence the importance of wearing masks properly). Different settings, purposes for gathering, and duration of gatherings may allow for different configurations. Generally, however, the more space between people from different households, the safer everyone will be.