

May 18, 2020

Friends,

We do not yet know exactly when we will re-open First United Methodist Church of Sachse for worship, Sunday school, mid-week activities, and the rest, but we know that we will re-open in phases. A small group has been meeting and working to establish protocols to follow as we re-open. The group includes people from across the congregation, the staff, and people from the Board of Trustees, the Music & Worship Committee, and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. We also know that in-person worship will look and sound different from how it was in February and early March. Protocols for re-opening were created with the purposes of maximizing safety and maintaining hospitality.

So, we have two "P's" to tell you about: Protocols and Phases.

1. Protocols for maximizing safety and maintaining hospitality include:

- a. Absolutely NO physical contact. NO handshakes, hugs, high fives, fist bumps, elbow shakes, hip bumps. Nothing. (You know who you are.)
- b. Hand sanitizing stations at every door.
- c. Only the doors to the sanctuary, the double doors by the restrooms, and by the church office will be open.
- d. Offering plates will be at the sanctuary doors, and will not be passed during worship.
- e. No printed bulletins
- f. One worship service only, at 10:45 a.m.
- g. No coffee from the coffee station. (I know, but it's only for an hour. You can handle it. You may even bring from home, but not to share.)
- h. Masks must be worn in the church buildings. The church will take steps to have a limited number of disposable masks available if you forget to bring one.
- i. An RSVP system called "Intend to Attend" will be utilized to plan seating requirements. The RSVP will include an indication for child care needs, and also an assurance that those attending are illness/symptom free. As a church of course, we will turn no person away at the door. This simply helps us plan. (Details forthcoming.)
- j. Family and households will be permitted to sit together.
- k. At least two chairs between families.
- l. Seating on alternate rows only, starting with the second row. (Methodists never sit on the front row, of course.)
- m. Dismissal after benediction will be done only by groups. There will not be a big group at the doors.
- n. Communion will not be observed in worship. Instead, we will offer an on-line virtual love feast some other time during the week.
- o. Hymn singing may be shelved for an unknown period. This is still being discussed in committee.
- p. Sanitize sanctuary, bathrooms, nursery, hearing devices, and doors each week.
- q. For now, children will not come forward for children's time, and there will be no kid's church.
- r. Arrival at church is permitted as early as 10:00 a.m. to allow a "trickle in" arrival
- s. Doors to be propped open and remain open during worship for as many Sundays as we can stand it in the Texas summer.
- t. Those who are aged 65+ or in a high-risk category are encouraged to continue worshipping with us from home. (Please note, our on-line worship will continue after all this is over.)
- u. Hymnals and Bibles removed from sanctuary.
- v. Wow, we almost used the entire alphabet. That is a lot of protocols, but under the circumstances, it's better to have too many than not enough.



2. **Phases for reopening.** (See chart below) We are not certain how long each phase will last, but we are planning for a minimum of four weeks for Phase 1. Additionally, it is not yet known whether some of these phases might be combined, or whether some aspects may be moved from one phase to another. We are all remaining fluid and prayerful. After all, we are essentially making this up as we go, soliciting as much wisdom as possible.

Phase 1 (min. 4 weeks)	Possible additions in Phase 2	Possible additions in Phase 3	Possible additions in Phase 4
Worship at 10:45 a.m. Sundays in Sanctuary, using FLC as overflow			
Child care			
On-line love feast (not as part of Sunday morning worship)			
	Sunday School for adults (move 1 class to sanctuary possibly)		
	Sunday school for youth in classrooms on plastic chairs		
	Sunday school for children		
	Sunday school reservation system		
	Communion (possibly 1x/month)		
	Handbells		
	Sunday evening UMYF	Kid's church during worship following children's time	
		Mid-week classes	
		Committee meetings	Outside groups
			Choir / band

Please feel free to contact me either by email (frank@fumcsachse.org) or cell phone (214-770-7298) with any questions or suggestions. This document and these plans are still a work-in-progress, but will serve as a blueprint as we move forward. As your pastor, I am deeply grateful to the church members and staff who helped assemble this document. Also, we are all deeply committed to assuring our safety together.

Grace & peace,

Frank Rahm
Pastor

Evan Bys
Chair, Board of Trustees

