

**EMBRACE THE NOW, PREPARE FOR THE NEXT:
A PLAN FOR RESUMING IN-PERSON WORSHIP IN
THE VIRGINIA CONFERENCE IN STAGES**

HANDBOOK FOR LOCAL CHURCHES

May 13, 2020

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I. Introduction.

Bishop Sharma Lewis formed the Back to In-Person Work Group of the Virginia Conference and she asked them to develop a detailed plan with comprehensive guidance for having the local churches resume in-person worship in stages. The Work Group reviewed public health guidance from the federal and state governments while balancing the safety of people eventually returning to in-person worship at small, medium, and large churches. The Cabinet and Bishop Lewis reviewed the Handbook on May 12, 2020 and Bishop Lewis approved it on May 13, 2020.

We are in the midst of an historic, disruptive time as our nation and our churches have responded to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have learned how God can work in us and how we can be church without the church building. Though these have been painful times, we embrace the new things we have learned and the practices that have sustained us.

As we prepare for the next stages in our journey with God, we want to remember John Wesley's 3 Simple Rules:

- **Do No Harm**—We recognize that the following plan and its supporting material may seem cumbersome, restrictive, and even somewhat scary. However, we outline these details because we value the health and wellbeing of all God's people, especially the vulnerable ones. As churches, we pray that no one will be endangered or placed at unnecessary risk, just as we desire that others would do the same to us (Luke 6:31).
- **Do Good**— By implementing the following plan, with God's help, we seek to do all the good we can to others. This is our prayerful effort to spread God's love, not harm. To this end, we submit ourselves to Spirit-led self-discipline (2 Tim. 1:7) so that others may be blessed by our love-filled actions.
- **Stay in Love with God** —We long for the return to in-person worship as one of the most important means of staying in love with God (Jn. 4:23-24, Heb. 10:25). In order to offer this precious means of grace in the safest possible way, we have relied on the best wisdom we can glean from medical, church, governmental, and legal resources. We offer the following plan, praying that in coming weeks and years more and more people will come to know the love of God and passionately stay in it.

We will resume in-person worship gradually and with great care. Even when we move into more moderate restrictions, we recognize that regional, county, or local outbreaks may require some or all of our churches to delay moving to a specific stage and it may require the return to more severe restrictions. Based on the severity of the outbreak in a particular district or a part of a district, District Superintendents may use their discretion in delaying implementation of any stage below until conditions allow. As of May 13, 2020, the Northern Virginia region will stay in the Commonwealth's Phase 0 and they will not be moving into Stage 1, as defined below.

We are confident, however, that we can work together, building on where we have been and preparing for what comes next.

These measures are intended to show that we care about one another. COVID-19 is a brand-new viral infection that is more easily transmitted than influenza. There is no vaccine or treatment as there is for influenza, and it is so new that no one is immune. Eight of every ten people who get the infection have a mild respiratory illness, but two of ten have a serious or life-threatening illness, and some die. Current estimates are that COVID-19 is perhaps ten times more deadly than seasonal influenza.

In the past three months, COVID-19 has become the most common cause of death in the United States. Some people are at even higher risk of serious or life-threatening COVID-19 because of being 65 years or older, underlying medical conditions (such as chronic lung, heart, liver, or kidney conditions, diabetes mellitus, severe obesity, or compromised immune responses.) The infection is easily transmitted by very small droplets from the respiratory tract of infected people from coughing, sneezing, talking, or even singing. Also, one may pick up the infection by touching a surface that an infected person recently touched and then touching one's face. It has become clear that the infection may be transmitted from not only those who show symptoms and signs but also from people who feel completely normal. Thus, we must assume that anyone in our communities may transmit the virus producing COVID-19.

The general principles of preventing transmission includes hand washing or using hand disinfectants, avoiding touching the face, avoiding close contact with others by keeping physical distance of six feet, covering coughs and sneezes, avoiding groups of people, wearing a cloth covering over the mouth and nose when around others, and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces we touch. We adopt these measures to show that we care for one another.

Some of the common symptoms of COVI-19 are:

- shortness of breath;
- cough;
- headache;
- fatigue;
- vomiting;
- loss of taste or loss of smell;
- chills;
- fever;
- muscle aches;
- sore throat; or
- nausea.

This handbook contains the necessary requirements, rules, protocols, and guidance that must be followed by the churches within our Conference as we prepare for and implement the changes in the way we gather and worship in person. It is based on the current understandings of the COVID-19 pandemic and is subject to change based on updated public health guidance from

federal, state, and local authorities, including, but not limited to, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (“HHS”) <https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/index.html>, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>, the Virginia Department of Health (“VDH”) <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/>, and the discretion of leadership for the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church (the “Conference”). Updates of the requirements, rules, protocols, and guidance will be on the Conference website under <https://vaumc.org/return>. The Conference has the discretion to end any stage set forth below at any time based on health and safety concerns.

II. A Staged Approach: Executive Summary.

Following the White House’s three-phased approach to Opening Up American Again <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/> and the Commonwealth of Virginia’s three-phased plan, Forward Virginia Blueprint¹ <https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus/forwardvirginia/>, the Conference will be implementing the following stages to ensure the health and safety of everyone as they return to sanctuaries, chapels, and fellowship halls for in-person worship. The plan is summarized in the below chart on pages 6-8 and details of the plan follow on the next pages.

To be very clear, the Conference is requiring a number of rules and protocols in the various stages. These are not recommendations and these are not optional. The Bishop is ordering that the rules and protocols be implemented consistently no matter the size of the church. There are no exceptions to these rules and requirements. For instance, if a church does not follow the rules and requirements, in-person worship will be stopped at that location. If any individual refuses to follow the rules and requirements, the individual will be asked to leave the building or leave the drive-in service. If the non-complying individual refuses to leave the building or refuses to get back in his/her vehicle at a drive-in service, the service will immediately end and those in attendance must leave the church property.

The Conference is putting the priority of the safety of everyone present at an in-person service or a drive-in service over any one person that objects to the requirements, rules, protocols, or guidelines. We realize that some may oppose the requirements, rules, protocols, or guidelines but showing opposition by refusing to comply will not be tolerated. We do not have a vaccine and we know now that COVID-19 is highly contagious by inhaling respiratory droplets from others. This happens when people do not wear face coverings and when they do not stay 6

¹ On May 8, 2020, Governor Northam announced that places of worship may hold in-person services inside a building that allows for 50% capacity. (<https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/all-releases/2020/may/headline-856681-en.html>) There are a number of requirements the Conference will employ even if the Commonwealth lists certain things as optional or preferred. For example, the Commonwealth likely will not require face coverings for in-person worship **but the Conference will require face coverings for all that participate in any in-person worship service.** Although Governor Northam may allow more to attend in-person worship on May 15, 2020, the **Conference is not approving all churches for the 50% capacity for in-person worship.** The Conference will test in-person worship with a group of “Pioneer” churches to ensure that in-person worship can be conducted safely at this time during COVID-19 pandemic.

feet apart. **THE CONFERENCE WILL STRICTLY ENFORCE PHYSICAL SOCIAL DISTANCING² (STAY 6 FEET OR MORE AWAY FROM OTHERS) AND FACE COVERINGS FOR IN-PERSON MEETINGS.**

We are a connectional people and we need to follow these requirements and rules as a way of loving our neighbors at this time. Health and safety of our members, guests, employees, and our general community demands that we strictly adhere to all of these requirements, rules, and protocols.

| <p align="center"><u>STAGE 1: RETURN REQUIREMENTS</u> <i>Drive-In Worship, Online/Conference Call Services, and In-Person Pioneer Churches Only</i></p> <p align="center">Timeline: May 24, 2020 – TBD Determined by Bishop</p> | <p align="center"><u>STAGE 2: TRANSITION REQUIREMENTS</u> <i>Drive-In Worship, Online/Conference Call Services, and Additional Pioneer Churches</i></p> <p align="center">Timeline: TBD Determined by Bishop but subsequent to Governor’s announcement that the Commonwealth is moving into Stage 2</p> | <p align="center"><u>STAGE 3: NEW NORMAL REQUIREMENTS</u> <i>All Churches can resume worship using the New Normal Protocol</i></p> <p align="center">Timeline: TBD Determined by Bishop but subsequent to Governor’s announcement that the Commonwealth is moving into Stage 3</p> |
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| <p align="center">Individual Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CREATE A HEALTHY CHURCH TEAM³ • ANYONE THAT IS SICK MUST STAY AT HOME • FACE COVERING REQUIRED FOR ALL • STRICT PHYSICAL SOCIAL DISTANCING (STAY 6 FEET OR MORE AWAY FROM OTHERS) WHEN ENTERING THE BUILDING, WAITING FOR THE SERVICE TO BEGIN, AND EXITING THE BUILDING | <p align="center">Individual Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CONTINUE HEALTHY CHURCH TEAM • ANYONE THAT IS SICK MUST STAY AT HOME • FACE COVERING REQUIRED FOR ALL • STRICT PHYSICAL SOCIAL DISTANCING (STAY 6 FEET OR MORE AWAY FROM OTHERS) WHEN ENTERING THE BUILDING, WAITING FOR THE SERVICE TO BEGIN, AND EXITING THE BUILDING | <p align="center">Individual Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CONTINUE HEALTHY CHURCH TEAM • ANYONE THAT IS SICK MUST STAY AT HOME • FACE COVERING OPTIONAL • MODERATE SAFE DISTANCING WHEN ENTERING THE BUILDING, WAITING FOR THE SERVICE TO BEGIN, AND EXITING THE BUILDING. THE NEED TO BE 6 FEET APART SHOULD BE GONE. |

² Social distancing applies to those you have not been in daily contact with as part of the stay at home order. Social distancing does not apply to those family members or others living in your home that you have been in daily contact with since mid-March 2020 when the stay at home order was issued by the Governor.

³ The Healthy Church Team will be formed with at least the following members: Senior Clergy, Lead Laity member, a member of the Board of Trustees, a member of Church Council, a medical professional (if available in the membership), an attorney (if available in the membership), and a member from the usher/greeter team. Some churches have already been doing great work with their own Healthy Church Teams.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRICT PHYSICAL SOCIAL DISTANCING (STAY 6 FEET OR MORE AWAY FROM OTHERS) IN SANCTUARY SEATING⁴ • LARGER CHURCHES MAY HAVE MULTIPLE SERVICES IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE BUILDING AT THE SAME TIME • NO SINGING • NO MATERIAL IN THE PEW RACKS OR ON THE PEWS OR SEATS • DIGITAL BULLETIN • DIGITAL WORDS FOR WORSHIP ELEMENTS • NO NURSERY, CHILDREN’S MINISTRY, SUNDAY SCHOOL • NO COFFEE OR FELLOWSHIP TIME • NO RESTROOM FOR DRIVE-IN; LIMITED RESTROOM FOR PIONEER CHURCHES • NO HANDSHAKE OR HUGGING • SANITIZER STATIONS OPTIONAL (BASED ON AVAILABILITY) • OFFERING—DROP OFF ONLY • COMMUNION (PRE-PACKAGED) • NO BAPTISMS • WEDDINGS WITH PHYSICAL SOCIAL DISTANCING (STAY 6 FEET OR MORE AWAY FROM OTHERS) AND NUMBER RESTRICTIONS • FUNERALS WITH PHYSICAL SOCIAL DISTANCING (STAY 6 FEET OR MORE AWAY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STRICT PHYSICAL SOCIAL DISTANCING (STAY 6 FEET OR MORE AWAY FROM OTHERS) IN SANCTUARY SEATING. • LARGER CHURCHES MAY HAVE MULTIPLE SERVICES IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE BUILDING AT THE SAME TIME • NO SINGING • NO MATERIAL IN THE PEW RACKS OR ON THE PEWS OR SEATS • DIGITAL BULLETIN • DIGITAL WORDS FOR WORSHIP ELEMENTS • NO NURSERY, CHILDREN’S MINISTRY, SUNDAY SCHOOL • NO COFFEE OR FELLOWSHIP TIME • LIMITED RESTROOMS AVAILABLE BASED ON SAFETY • NO HANDSHAKE OR HUGGING • SANITIZER STATIONS OPTIONAL (BASED ON AVAILABILITY) • OFFERING—DROP OFF ONLY • COMMUNION (PRE-PACKAGED) • NO BAPTISMS • WEDDINGS WITH PHYSICAL SOCIAL DISTANCING (STAY 6 FEET OR MORE AWAY FROM OTHERS) AND NUMBER RESTRICTIONS • FUNERALS WITH PHYSICAL SOCIAL DISTANCING (STAY 6 FEET OR MORE AWAY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NORMAL SANCTUARY SEATING. THE PEWS CAN BE FILLED AND FOLKS CAN SIT NEAR THEIR FAMILY AND FRIENDS AGAIN. • LARGER CHURCHES MAY HAVE MULTIPLE SERVICES IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE BUILDING AT THE SAME TIME • NO SINGING • CHOIRS & CONTEMPORARY SINGERS MAY BE LIMITED BASED ON RULES • PAPER BULLETIN • DIGITAL WORDS FOR WORSHIP ELEMENTS • NURSERY, CHILDREN’S MINISTRY, SUNDAY SCHOOL • COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP TIME RESUMES • ALL RESTROOMS AVAILABLE WITH NO SAFETY CONCERNS • HANDSHAKE OR HUGGING (OPTIONAL) • SANITIZER STATIONS OPTIONAL (BASED ON AVAILABILITY) • OFFERING--PLATE PASSING & DROP OFF • REGULAR COMMUNION & PRE-PACKAGED • BAPTISMS • WEDDINGS WITHOUT PHYSICAL SOCIAL DISTANCING AND NUMBER RESTRICTIONS WILL BE ALLOWED • FUNERALS WITHOUT SOCIAL DISTANCING AND NUMBER RESTRICTIONS |
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⁴ Additional services or spaces in the building may hold service such as chapels and fellowship halls.

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| <p>FROM OTHERS) AND NUMBER RESTRICTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CLEAN HIGH TOUCH AREAS ● PRACTICE PHYSICAL SOCIAL DISTANCING (STAY 6 FEET OR MORE AWAY FROM OTHERS) DURING DISMISSAL⁵ ● No CHILDCARE & No CHILDREN UNDER 12⁶ | <p>FROM OTHERS) AND NUMBER RESTRICTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CLEAN HIGH TOUCH AREAS ● PRACTICE PHYSICAL SOCIAL DISTANCING (STAY 6 FEET OR MORE AWAY FROM OTHERS) DURING DISMISSAL ● LIMITED CHILDCARE⁷ ONLY | <p>WILL BE ALLOWED AT ALL LOCATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CLEAN HIGH TOUCH AREAS ● DISMISSAL WITHOUT REQUIRED SOCIAL DISTANCING BUT VOLUNTARY SOCIAL DISTANCING PREFERRED ● CHILDCARE |
| <p>Church Programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 25 INDIVIDUALS IN PIONEER CHURCH SERVICES ONLY. THE 25 NUMBER DOES NOT INCLUDE CLERGY, VOLUNTEERS, AND OTHER STAFF AS LONG AS THE NUMBERS DO NOT EXCEED 50% OF THE OCCUPANCY IN THE SANCTUARY, CHAPEL, OR FELLOWSHIP HALL ● NO IN-PERSON VBS ● NO LARGE GATHERINGS ● NO LARGE OUTSIDE GATHERINGS ● CONTINUE LIVE-STREAM FOR ALL, INCLUDING THE MOST VULNERABLE ● NO SUMMER CAMPS ● LIMITED PRESCHOOL BASED ON ESSENTIAL WORKERS | <p>Church Programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 50 INDIVIDUALS IN PIONEER CHURCH SERVICES ONLY. THE 50 NUMBER DOES NOT INCLUDE CLERGY, VOLUNTEERS, AND OTHER STAFF AS LONG AS THE NUMBERS DO NOT EXCEED 50% OF THE OCCUPANCY IN THE SANCTUARY, CHAPEL, OR FELLOWSHIP HALL ● NO IN-PERSON VBS ● NO LARGE GATHERINGS ● NO LARGE OUTSIDE GATHERINGS ● CONTINUE LIVE-STREAM FOR ALL, INCLUDING THE MOST VULNERABLE ● NO SUMMER CAMPS ● LIMITED PRESCHOOL BASED ON ESSENTIAL WORKERS ● BLOOD DRIVES | <p>Church Programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● UNLIMITED INDIVIDUALS IN ALL CHURCHES WITHOUT A NUMBER RESTRICTION. CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ALTERNATE PROGRAMMING FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATION. OTHER PROGRAMMING SHOULD BE CONSIDERED. ● SOCIAL DISTANCING VBS ● LARGE GATHERINGS ● LARGE OUTSIDE GATHERINGS ● CONTINUE LIVE-STREAM FOR ALL, INCLUDING THE MOST VULNERABLE ● SUMMER CAMPS ● PRESCHOOL FOR ESSENTIAL AND NON-ESSENTIAL WORKERS ● BLOOD DRIVES ● DRIVE-BY FOOD DISTRIBUTION PREPARED BY HEALTH DEPARTMENT APPROVED CHURCH KITCHEN |

⁵ We will dismiss by rows to ensure social distancing.

⁶ Some children interact with touching and it is difficult to control many children from not touching surfaces and others.

⁷ When we re-introduce childcare, there will be social distancing required and safe sanctuary requirements.

III. The Preparation Stage.

Timeline: Immediately
Worship Options: No in-person worship; Online/Conference Call worship;
Development of Healthy Church Team - Consideration of willingness/ability to be a Pioneer church.

In preparation for beginning the stages of returning to in-person worship, all churches will create a **Healthy Church Team** (“HCT”) to prepare for the time when they are able to offer in-person worship. The HCT will provide advice and counsel to the lead Clergy and the Chairs of Trustees, Church Council, and S/PPRC. The HCT should include: Senior Clergy, Lead Laity member, a member of the Board of Trustees, a member of Church Council, a medical professional (if available in the membership), an attorney (if available in the membership), a member from the usher/greeter team, and any outside consultants should be sought.

The HCT will coordinate with the clergy, staff, volunteers, and the District Superintendent on a number of issues associated with creating a plan for in-person worship that complies with the requirements, rules, and protocols in this document. Consideration should be given to preparing the building, accommodating worship with strict distancing (6 feet or more) and face coverings, sanitation protocols [See Attachments A and C], and communicating plans with the congregation and the community. Churches should determine their readiness, willingness, and ability to move to different forms of worship, including whether they can be a Pioneer church. **No churches will offer in-person worship during this period.** Church staff may be returning to work at the church office on or before May 15 unless there are specific issues that apply to secular staff under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act⁸ (“FFCRA”), the Americans with Disabilities Act⁹ (“ADA”) (if applicable), or the Virginians with Disabilities Act¹⁰ (“VDA”)(if applicable).

Definition: Pioneer churches are those churches that agree to follow the requirements, rules, and protocols in this document [See Attachments A and C], to move gradually into in-person worship during Stage 1, and to communicate their lessons learned and best practices with the churches in their Districts, other churches in other Districts, the Cabinet, and the Bishop. Churches should indicate to their District Superintendent if they are willing to be considered for this role. We will start with a limited number of Pioneer churches in the beginning to ensure that we can do in-person worship safely.

We expect to add more Pioneer churches in Stages 1 and 2 but there is no timetable for adding additional churches. After sharing their plans for approval with the District Superintendent, a small initial number of churches will be selected for Stage 1 with the number expanding as we learn.

⁸ The FFCRA applies to secular employees but not ministerial employees. The FFCRA deals with leave issues because of COVID-19 reasons.

⁹ The ADA applies to secular employees that work for churches with 15 or more employees.

¹⁰ The VDA applies to secular employees that work for churches with between 5-14 employees.

IV. Stage 1: Limited Return to In-Person Worship.

Timeline: **Beginning on May 24, 2020.** We will start with twenty-five (25) people only in Pioneer Churches.

Worship Options: Drive-In Worship, Online/Conference Call Worship, and Pioneer Churches Only.

In Stage 1, the focus will be on Drive-In worship, continued Online/Conference Call worship, and Pioneer churches testing the in-person worship with 25 people only.

- A. Drive-In Worship—Beginning on May 24, 2020, every church that wants to have members gather in the church parking lot or any other parking lot led by UMC clergy, must adhere to the Drive-In Worship requirements [See Attachment B].
- Required—Pre-attendance temperature check requirements (temperature must be less than 100.4 degrees which means no fever) If you have a fever or you are sick without a fever, stay home.
 - Voluntary—Contact the local church to let them know you are planning to attend. This will help determine capacity and other logistics (depending on demand, there may need to be more than 1 service).
 - Voluntary—Review your own health using the Health Acknowledgment form. You can download the form from the Conference website at <https://vaumc.org/return>.
 - Identify service logistics (outdoor stage with audio or broadcasting on internet radio or online, etc.). It's tempting to think of lots of ways to enhance the service, such as projecting the words on a screen, etc. But keep in mind, the more you do, then the more volunteers and equipment you require. The risk of exposure goes up when there are more people helping and more surfaces that can be touched by those setting up. Keep it all as simple as possible.
 - Provide volunteers to direct traffic and help with parking requirements.
 - Comply with and enforce strict physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) protocol at all times (churchgoers must park apart from other vehicles and remain in their vehicles for the entirety of the service and leave the parking lot without leaving the vehicle).
 - No shared worship materials and no access to church facilities, including restrooms for Drive-In Worship.
 - No shared worship materials and limited access to church facilities, including restrooms.
 - Consider providing electronic materials for worship in advance (*i.e.* a bulletin, Bible passages, etc.).
 - Enforcement of rules, requirements, and protocols for everyone. If someone leaves their vehicle, they will be asked to get back in their vehicle. If they refuse, the service will end immediately and everyone will need to leave the parking lot. The person that violates the “stay in vehicle rule” will not be allowed back on church property until he/she agrees to

comply with all of the requirements, rules, and protocols. Safety of everyone is of utmost importance and we will not allow anyone to endanger the safety of our members, guests, and the community.

- B. Online/Conference Call Services—If the church is already conducting online services, are there other ministries that can be conducted using Livestream, Zoom or conference calls?
- C. Pioneer Churches—During this Stage, gatherings will be restricted to 25 persons or less (Clergy and worship leaders not included) as long as the church can comply with the 50% occupancy rule discussed above.

The Pioneer churches are a small number of churches representing different regions, facilities, and congregational sizes that have indicated their willingness and ability to test our ability to conduct in-person worship during a pandemic. The Pioneer churches will implement the plans developed during the Preparation Stage using the Strict Protocol Requirements [See Attachment C].

We recommend that each Pioneer church start with a “soft in-person” test on a weeknight before they have a Sunday service. This should be conducted while it is still light outside. It is recommended that the Pioneer church conduct this test with 25 people that have agreed to do what is required below and in Attachment C and that the volunteer team also practice various logistics. A short worship service will take place that evening with the clergy.

Each Pioneer church may have multiple services at the same time, if the campus allows it, or multiple services during a weekend with the 25-person restriction with proper cleaning between services, which includes cleaning all high touch areas. The District Superintendent will coordinate with the clergy of the Pioneer churches and all other churches in the District so everyone can learn from this process. There will be reporting requirements to the Cabinet and Bishop.

Beginning on May 24, 2020, the Pioneer churches only must adhere to the Pioneer Worship requirements [See Attachment C].

- Required—Register with the church to let them know you are planning to attend. This will help determine capacity and other logistics (depending on demand, there may need to be more than 1 service). **No children under 12 will be allowed at in-person services in this stage or any stage when a face covering is required at in-person worship. If a person is not able to wear a face covering, the person cannot attend an in-person service in this stage or any stage where a mask is required. If a person has breathing difficulties and cannot wear a face covering, the person cannot attend an in-person service in this stage or any stage where a mask is required.**

- Required—Pre-attendance temperature check requirements (temperature must be less than 100.4 degrees means no fever) If you have a fever or you are sick without a fever, stay home.
- **Required—Everyone must wear a face covering at all times. The church will not provide face coverings. Bandanas work just fine. The nose and mouth must be covered at all times. As a general rule, the church will not be providing hand sanitizer because the supply is low and many churches may not be able to obtain enough for use for members and guests. If anyone wants or needs hand sanitizer, the person must bring it. The church will not be supplying other personal protective equipment (“PPE”) for anyone.**
- Required—Review your own health using the Health Acknowledgment form and complete it online or if there is not an online presence for the church, then reply by email by completing your Health Acknowledgement form and sending it in to the church. You can download the form from the Conference website at <https://vaumc.org/return>.
- Required—Have a vehicle traffic flow and building traffic flow team. Vehicles should be parked in a way to avoid contact with people leaving or getting into the vehicle to minimize the chance of violating the social distancing space with other people leaving or getting into their vehicles. This can be done by providing instructions or developing a parking plan. Also, determine which door(s) will be used to come into the church and which door(s) will be used to leave the church.
- Required—Identify service logistics. Greeting outside the building (proper physical social distancing-stay 6 feet or more away from others) to check that each person entering is wearing a face covering. Churches are not provided face coverings. If the person does not have a face covering, they do not enter. Have the greeter by the door lock the door if the person approaching the building refused to wear a face covering. Greet each person inside the building (proper physical social distancing-stay 6 feet or more away from others) to ensure the person is wearing the face covering; monitor the service to ensure that everyone wears the face covering the entire time on church property and until they get back in their vehicle.
- Required—Comply with and enforce strict physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) protocol at all times. Seating in the building will be 6 feet apart from those that are not immediate family members that have been together in one location since March 12, 2020.
- No shared worship materials and limited access to church facilities, including restrooms.
- Consider providing electronic materials for worship in advance (*i.e.* a bulletin, Bible passages, etc.).
- Enforcement of rules, requirements, and protocols for everyone. If someone removes his/her face covering, they will be asked to put the face covering back on. If the person refuses, the service will be stopped and everyone will leave. The person that violates the “mandatory face covering rule” will not be allowed back on church property until he/she

agrees to comply with all of the requirements, rules, and protocols. The same is true for failing to abide by strict physical social distancing (staying 6 feet or more away from others). If someone fails to abide by the physical social distancing requirement, they will be asked to do so. If the person refuses, the service will be stopped and everyone will leave. The person that violates the “physical social distancing rule” will not be allowed back on church property until he/she agrees to comply with all of the requirements, rules, and protocols. The safety of everyone is of utmost importance and we will not allow anyone to endanger the safety of our members, guests, and the community.

V. Stage 2: Transition.

- Timeline:** TBD; We will move to allowing all churches with average worship attendance of 50 people or less to return to in-person worship as long as they follow the rules, requirements, and protocols in Attachment C. We also will allow some medium and large churches to have in-person worship with 50 people or less so long as they do not go over the 50% total occupancy rule from the Commonwealth. This decision will be made in the sole discretion of the Bishop based on the results in Stage 1 and following the Governor’s Announcement that Virginia is moving into Stage 2.
- Worship Options:** Drive-In Worship, Online/Conference Call Worship, Additional Pioneer Churches, and possibly allowing in-person worship for 50 persons or less under these requirements, rules, and guidance.

In Stage 2, we anticipate churches may have in-person worship services and office spaces, but limit capacity in each instance to 50 or less individuals, while maintaining physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) at all times. Continued health and safety protocols, including the use of face coverings at all gatherings and proper sanitation measures, will be strictly adhered to and enforced. Drive-in and/or virtual worship will still be necessary in churches and congregations to accommodate vulnerable populations and larger worshipping communities.

The Strict Protocol Guidelines will be revised and improved based on the status of Virginia’s capacity limits and other health and safety protocols.

- A. All churches with Average Worship Attendance of 50 or less could resume worship following Strict Protocols [Attachment C].
- B. Additional medium and large churches as solicited and identified by District Superintendents could also meet using the gathering rule of 50 or less.
- C. No Church should feel obligated to open.

VI. Stage 3: New Normal.

- Timeline:** TBD; Determined by Bishop following Governor's Announcement that Virginia is moving into Stage 3.
- Worship Options:** All churches can resume worship in accordance with prevailing state gathering restrictions using the New Normal Protocol [Attachment D].

In Stage 3, once there is no evidence of a COVID-19 rebound for a sustained period of time, there will no longer be a capacity limit on in-person worship services. Thus, all churches will be invited to open under any prevailing public health protocols. Heightened cleaning and disinfection, along with some physical distancing, will still be required as per civic guidelines. Church programming will not return to normal, either, as restrictive practices will still guide certain celebrations and ministries. During this time, the Conference will continue to assess the pandemic's impact and continue prayerful discernment of its future ministry.

The Strict Protocol Guidelines will be revised and improved based on the status of Virginia's capacity limits and other health and safety protocols.

VII. The Back to In-Person Worship Workgroup.

Bishop Lewis thanks the Back to In-Person Worship Workgroup for their good work to date and for their continued good work as we move through the various stages of returning to in-person worship. The following dedicated people make up this Workgroup:

The Rev. Alex Joyner, Eastern Shore DS, chair
Mr. Steve Brown, Conference Chancellor
The Rev. Jay Carey, pastor, Bethia UMC, Chesterfield, DS Designate
The Rev. Douglas Forrester, pastor, Reveille UMC, Richmond, DS Designate
The Rev. Seonyoung Kim, York River DS
The Rev. Brenda Laws, deacon, Eastern Shore District
The Rev. Dr. Hyo Lee, pastor, Sudley UMC, Manassas, DS Designate
Dr. Karen McElfish, Arlington District Lay Leader, pediatrician
Dr. George Moxley, physician and rheumatologist, VCU
The Rev. Wayne Snead, Elizabeth River DS
Mr. Neal Wise, Annual Conference Event Coordinator

VIII. Attachment A: Healthy Church Team Requirements.

A. Strict Protocol Requirements: Generally

- **Individual Safety**
 - Sick must stay home
 - Face coverings required
 - Disposable gloves for Greeters, Ushers, Communion Helpers, counters if available
 - Sanitizer stations will not be available for members and guests. Individuals need to bring their own hand sanitizer
 - Strict physical distancing - 6 feet or more at all times
 - Hymnals, Bibles, and all worship materials removed
 - No choirs
 - No singing - including Congregation
 - Worship only
 - Digital bulletin
 - Digital words for worship elements
 - No nursery or children's time
 - No coffee or fellowship time
 - No handshakes or hugging
 - Drop-off only (offering)
 - Communion (pre-packaged)³
 - No baptisms
 - No weddings
 - No funerals
 - Clean high touch areas
 - Physical distancing (6 feet or more) during dismissal⁴
 - Strict physical distancing in Sanctuary seating

- **Church Programming**
 - Gatherings of no more than 25 individuals (Stage 1 in Pioneer churches only) or 50 (Stage 2 if possible, as set forth above)
 - No in person vacation Bible School
 - No large gatherings including revivals and camp meetings
 - No large outside gatherings
 - Continue livestream for most vulnerable
 - Childcare for essential/nonessential with physical distancing

B. Strict Protocol Requirements: Specifically

- **What have we learned?**
 - Ask the team to assess the ministry of the church during the shutdown period?
 - What did we learn to do differently?
 - What blessings did God send to us?
 - What gifts did we have that we didn't know we had?
 - What are we doing that we want to keep doing?
 - What things that we used to do can we stop doing?

- **Assessment of Volunteers and Staff.**
 - Secure volunteers to clean and prepare the church campus for in-person worship.
 - Staff and volunteers will be screened and required to complete a Health Acknowledgement Form and asked other questions about their health to ensure they are not ill.
 - Staff and volunteers will also need to adhere to all requirements, rules, and protocols.

- **Cleaning Plan.**
 - Make plans to clean and sanitize the facility and to prepare the campus so that people can adequately comply with physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) from the time they enter the property until they leave. Develop signage to offer clear directives to attendees on how to behave and uphold protocols.
 - Clean the church or confirm that it has been cleaned since it was closed. This needs to be communicated to the District Superintendent and to the congregation based on a communication plan.
 - Ensure the church has adequate amounts of cleaning and sanitization products. Check cleaners for EPA and FDA labels as being effective against coronaviruses. Alcohol-based surface cleaners are adequate to kill this virus.
 - Clean handrails, tables and chairs, bathrooms, and the back of pews.
 - Clean in-between uses and worship services (if applicable) by wiping down touchable and common surfaces.
 - Clean the AV and computer equipment.
 - Reduce touchable items in all areas.
 - Remove all materials normally available in paper or otherwise from the sanctuary, chapel, or fellowship hall (or other meeting

place), and instead plan to rely on projected slides and verbal instruction.

- Reduce the number of toys and clean and disinfect all toys. Remove all stuffed animals.
 - Turn off the water fountains.
 - Minimize the reasons persons would touch common surfaces (doorknobs, etc.) while in the building – leaving some doors open during services.
 - Sanitizer stations will not be in churches for members and guests. Individuals need to bring their own personal hand sanitizer.
 - Create and display signage (Inside and Outside) to offer clear directives to attendees.
 - Mark designated entrances, exits, and building traffic patterns.
 - Mark seating arrangements and provide social-distancing instruction.
 - Remind people to practice physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others), hand washing, and not to touch their faces.
 - Determine whether to restrict access to certain areas of the church campus.
 - Consider keeping the nurseries, gym, classrooms, offices, kitchen, and playgrounds closed.
-
- **Physical Distancing Plan (6 feet or more)**
 - Develop a plan for physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others), taking into consideration:
 - How to maintain distancing at entrances, exits, sanctuary, chapel, fellowship halls, restrooms, narthex, and overflow areas.
 - Monitoring persons to help keep physical distancing.
 - Reduce length of worship services to allow for congregants to come and go safely.
 - Ensure everyone stays 6 feet away from one another.
 - Family members that have been together the entire time are not required to be 6 feet apart.
 - If you are sick, stay home.
 - Everyone will be required to wear a face covering the entire time in the service. If you cannot wear a face covering or you refuse to wear a face covering, you cannot attend in-person worship.
 - Develop a seating plan to arrange the seating in a manner that complies with physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) constraints.
 - Develop a plan for coming and going: Ensure proper physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) can be

maintained in the entrance and exit, restrooms, and any other common spaces.

- Develop a parking plan to adhere to physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) requirements even while outside.
 - Require attendees to park with at least the spots on the left and right of their vehicle open for Drive-In Worship Services only.
 - Mark-off parking spots as necessary.
 - For Pioneer churches, vehicles should be parked in a way to avoid contact with people leaving or getting into the vehicle to minimize the chance of violating the social distancing space with other people leaving or getting into their vehicles. This can be done by providing instructions or developing a parking plan.
-
- **Check with Liability Insurer for implications of your plans**
 - **Develop a Plan for Ministry with the most vulnerable**
 - Develop programs/care networks to keep them engaged.
 - Determine if a special service day and time can be used.
 - **Continue Streaming Worship, Devotionals, and Bible Study**
 - **Communication Plan.**
 - Send out the communication to your members with the plan for services offered and any rules for attendance.
 - Post the communication on your website along with the rules for attendance. If you don't have a website, post it on whatever social media platform you use.
 - Allow time for congregants to build trust and process the reopening plan.
 - Multi Soft Opening Experiences during weekdays.
 - Walk through video of what the new normal will be like.
 - Develop signage: Directional, washing hands/sanitizer locations, seating.
 - Consider providing digital material for services ahead of time, including posting your bulletin on your website or social media platform and/or emailing your members the bulletin.
 - **Development of an Emergency Preparation Plan Considering the Following:**
 - An isolation or holding room for those who are symptomatic.
 - Contact information for medical professionals and local public health authority, 911 address of the church, local emergency departments, in a visible place in the church.

- Procedure to accommodate for volunteers who are absent.
- Communicating the plan.
- **Communicate Expectations/Requirements to Groups Sharing the Facility**

IX. Healthy Church Team: Questions and Answers.

- **What have we learned?**

Q. Who should be on the Healthy Church Team?

A. The HCT should include: Senior Clergy, Lead Laity member, a member of the Board of Trustees, a member of Church Council, a medical professional (if available in the membership), an attorney (if available in the membership), and a member from the usher/greeter team. Anyone on the HCT will be required to complete a Health Acknowledgement Form.

Q. What will the HCT do and decide?

A. The HCT will provide advice and counsel to the lead Clergy and the Chair of Trustees, Church Council, and S/PPRC on how to implement these requirements, rules, and protocols, and where, as necessary, to modify and change these requirements, rules, and protocols. The HCT will also make worship decision for the church, including the types of services to offer and whether the church should volunteer to the District Superintendent to be considered as a Pioneer church.

- **Assessment of Volunteers and Staff.**

Q. Do clergy and staff members need to complete a Health Acknowledge Form and can the church ask staff members questions about their health?

A. Because the health and safety of our churches is the utmost priority, clergy and staff members must complete a Health Acknowledgment Form and update it on a regular basis. It is very important that all clergy and staff members self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever above 100.4, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, sore throat, headache, muscle pain, gastrointestinal issues, chills, and new loss of taste and/or smell) on a daily basis and update the Health Acknowledgement Form as often as requested by the church, District Superintendent, or Bishop. Anyone who presents with these symptoms or feels sick will be sent home. Also, during a pandemic, the church can ask a number of health-related questions of clergy and staff on a regular basis.

- Q. How will volunteers be selected to help clean and sanitize the church?
- A. Because the health and safety of our churches is the utmost priority, the selection of healthy and non-vulnerable volunteers is crucial. It is very important that all prospective volunteers self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever above 100.4, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, sore throat, headache, muscle pain, gastrointestinal issues, chills, and new loss of taste and/or smell) and complete a Health Acknowledgement Form. Anyone who presents with these symptoms or feels sick will not be selected to volunteer. Vulnerable individuals (i.e. persons over age 65 and/or those with pre-existing medical conditions), will not be selected as volunteers due to the increased risk of serving as a volunteer.
- Q. What if I want to volunteer?
- A. If you wish to volunteer, notify your Healthy Church Team and/or follow the procedure outlined in any communications sent by your church regarding volunteering. All persons selected to volunteer will undergo training on proper use of personal protective equipment (“PPE”), as well as proper cleaning and sanitization techniques. Once you have volunteered, begin self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms, including checking your temperature each day. When volunteering, wear a face covering at all times, bring hand sanitizer with you, and maintain strict physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others). Do not touch your face and avoid unnecessary contact with other volunteers. If you live or are quarantined with other persons, we recommend you create a changing station at your home – somewhere near an entrance or exit where you can wash your hands and face, remove all shoes and garments worn while volunteering and change into clean garments, and properly store soiled garments before entering your home or common space.
- Q. What extra precautions should volunteers involved with cleaning the facility take or be aware of?
- A. According to the CDC, the risk of exposure to cleaning volunteers is inherently low. Cleaning volunteers should wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash.
- Gloves and gowns should be compatible with the disinfectant products being used.
 - Additional personal protective equipment (“PPE”) might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.
 - Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area. Be sure to clean hands after removing gloves.

- If gowns are not available, coveralls, aprons or work uniforms can be worn during cleaning and disinfecting. Reusable (washable) clothing should be laundered afterwards. Clean hands after handling dirty laundry.
 - Cleaning volunteers should clean hands often, including immediately after removing gloves, by washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used. Sanitizer stations will not be in churches for members and guests. Individuals need to bring their own personal hand sanitizer. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.
- **Cleaning Plan.**

Q. What are the proper cleaning techniques to follow to ensure we're properly sanitizing and disinfecting all surfaces?

A. Churches should thoroughly clean and sanitize all surfaces, paying particular attention to frequently touched surfaces. Churches should follow these careful cleaning procedures not only in anticipation of re-welcoming church goes back to in-person worship, but also continuing after in-person worship services begin, frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned, sanitized, and disinfected at least daily and between use for shared objects.

The CDC recommends the following cleaning methods based on the type of surface being cleaned:

- **Hard (Non-porous) Surfaces**
 - If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
 - For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
 - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products for concentration, application method and contact time, etc.
 - Additionally, diluted household bleach solutions (at least 1000ppm sodium hypochlorite) can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application, ensuring a contact time of at least 1 minute, and allowing proper ventilation during and after application. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted. Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.
 - Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water
or

- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- Soft (Porous) Surfaces
 - For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning:
 - If the items can be laundered, launder items in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and then dry items completely.
 - Otherwise, use products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 and that are suitable for porous surfaces.
- Electronics
 - For electronics such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, microphones, and ATM machines, remove visible contamination if present.
 - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.
 - Consider use of wipeable covers for electronics.
 - If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.
- Linens, Clothing, and Other Items That Go in the Laundry
 - In order to minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air, do not shake dirty laundry.
 - Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
 - Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry according to guidance above for hard or soft surfaces.

Q. What other considerations should churches take into account when cleaning?

A. Ensure disinfectants are applied safely and correctly, and outside the presence of children. Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety risk.

Also, take steps to ensure that all water systems and features are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of diseases associated with water.

- **Physical Social Distancing Plan (6 feet or more)**

Q. What if our church is unable to accommodate physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) for limited in-person worship services?

A. You may continue to offer remote worship services (via video streaming), or drive-in worship services, or you may consider holding services in larger, well ventilated areas or outdoors. Remember, even when outside, church goers should maintain physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) at all times. Some churches may also be able to simultaneously host multiple services, *e.g.*, one small service in the sanctuary, one in the gym or fellowship hall, and one in the parking lot. Take careful consideration of your available space to ensure that physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) can be adhered to at all times.

- **Check with Liability Insurer for implications of your plans**

Q. Why should we check with our liability insurers?

A. You should confirm the parameters of your insurance policy so that you are aware of any and all duties you may have to protect your congregation, and in turn, any potential liability the church may face if a church goer, employee, volunteer, or visitor contracts COVID-19 and accuses the church of being the source of transmission. While it is unlikely that such a claim holds any legal basis, given the uncertainty of the current pandemic and the rapidly changing legal landscape, it is in each church's best interest to confirm their insurance limits, requirements and parameters.

- **Develop a Plan for Ministry with the most vulnerable**

Q. What if a vulnerable church member wishes to visit with a clergy member?

A. Encourage the clergy member to visit the vulnerable member via phone, online (via Zoom or a similar platform), or through another remote means that allows the clergy member to avoid an in-person visit with the vulnerable member. Even with physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) precautions, in-person visits can still present significant risks to the most vulnerable populations, and must be avoided. In end of life situations, certain compassionate care exceptions may be necessary on a case-by-case basis.

- **Continue streaming worship, devotionals, and Bible Study**

Q. Can non-members livestream services?

A. Of course. All are welcome to join us in worship and fellowship. In these uncertain times, new members may be drawn to worship and faith to help them cope with fears and anxiety surrounding this pandemic.

Q. Can attendees donate or make offerings during a livestream service?

A. Yes. Consider including a link or instructions for making an offering in your electronic bulletin or announcement or during the service itself.

Q. Is there a dress code for livestream services?

A. There is not a strict dress code for livestream services. Depending on how the livestream service is broadcast (i.e., through radio, Zoom, or another internet provider), you may not be visible to your fellow worshipers or the church staff and clergy, in which case your attire is within your discretion. If you will be visible to your fellow worshipers and church staff and clergy during the livestream, for instance, during a Zoom livestream worship service, then we ask that you please dress appropriately.

Q. Can I ask questions or communicate with the clergy or fellow worshipers during the livestream service?

A. Depending on how the livestream service is broadcast (i.e., through radio, Zoom, or another internet provider), you may not be able to communicate with the clergy or fellow worshipers during the service. If your church hosts its livestream worship service via an internet provider like Zoom, however, then we ask that you please mute your speaker until the clergy instructs attendees to unmute themselves.

- **Communication Plan.**

Q. What types of signage will we need to post in and around the church?

A. First, consider directional signage, including signs marking the designated entrance and exit, traffic flows, restricted areas, and seating and parking arrangements. The CDC provides a number of printable signs related to hand washing, face coverings, and physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others), which can be accessed here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>

X. Attachment B: Drive-In Worship Requirements.

A. Strict Protocol Requirements: Generally

- **Individual Safety**
 - Sick must stay home
 - Face coverings required
 - Disposable gloves for Greeters, Ushers, Communion Helpers, counters if available
 - Sanitizer stations will not be in churches for members and guests. Individuals need to bring their own personal hand sanitizer.
 - Strict physical distancing - 6 feet or more at all times
 - Hymnals, Bibles, and all worship materials removed
 - No choirs
 - No singing - including Congregation
 - Worship only
 - Digital bulletin
 - Digital words for worship elements
 - No nursery or children's time
 - No coffee or fellowship time
 - No handshakes or hugging
 - Drop-off only (offering)
 - Communion (pre-packaged)³
 - No baptisms
 - No weddings
 - No funerals
 - Clean high touch areas
 - Physical distancing (6 feet or more) during dismissal⁴
 - Strict physical distancing in Sanctuary seating

- **Church Programming**
 - Gatherings of no more than 25 individuals (Stage 1 in Pioneer churches only) or 50 (Stage 2 if possible, as set forth above)
 - No in person vacation Bible School
 - No large gatherings including revivals and camp meetings
 - No large outside gatherings
 - Continue livestream for most vulnerable
 - Childcare for essential/nonessential with physical distancing

B. Strict Protocol Requirements: Specifically

- **Registration.**
 - All those that want to attend Drive-In Worship must register with the church in advance.
 - Registration must be done **at least 4 days before** the service so there can be adequate planning.
 - There may need to be extra services added if the parking lot will be too full or if there is only one service, then it may have to be limited in how many can attend.

- **Day of the Service.**
 - Before leaving to attend the Drive-In Worship service, each attendee must:
 - Take his or her temperature. It must be less than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit in order to attend worship.
 - If you are feeling ill, stay home.
 - Be prepared to be without access to the church's restrooms.
 - Bring face coverings in case of an emergency and you need to leave your vehicle.

- **Service Logistics.**
 - Determine how you will provide the Drive-In Worship service.
 - It's tempting to think of lots of ways to enhance the service, such as projecting the words on a screen, etc. But keep in mind, the more you do, then the more volunteers and equipment you require. The risk of exposure goes up when there are more people helping and more surfaces that can be touched by those setting up. Keep it all as simple as possible.
 - Will the service be presented from an outdoor stage, and if so, will the stage be in the parking lot or on the edge of the parking lot?
 - If no stage is required, how will you handle audio issues safely?
 - If you are also providing the service via Zoom, internet, or radio, how will this be conducted?
 - Determine the type or format of service: traditional, contemporary, or a blend.
 - Comply with and enforce strict physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) protocol at all times (churchgoers must park apart from other vehicles and remain in their vehicles for the entirety of the service and leave the parking lot without leaving the vehicle).
 - No shared worship materials and no access to church facilities, including restrooms.

- **Emergency Services.**
 - Coordinate with local law enforcement and local emergency management.
 - Let them know you are planning to hold a Drive-In Worship service in the parking lot.
 - Determine if you need an emergency vehicle on the property and make the proper arrangements.

- **Parking.**
 - Park in every other spot.
 - There must be a spot open on the left and right of your vehicle.
 - Volunteers will direct traffic and help with parking requirements.

- **Assessment of Volunteers and Staff.**
 - Secure volunteers to direct parking and put up any signs needed.
 - Volunteers will be screened and asked questions about their health to ensure they are not ill.

- **Facilities.**
 - The church building will be locked and not accessible for members.
 - There will be no restrooms open.
 - No playground will be open.
 - No one can leave their vehicle for any reason unless there is a health emergency (using the restroom is not a health emergency—if you need to use the restroom and you cannot wait until the service is over, go back home).

- **Physical Social Distancing.**
 - Everyone, including volunteers, staff, and clergy must follow physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) at all times.
 - This means everyone must stay at least 6 feet away from each other.
 - No one should leave their vehicles for any reason (unless a health emergency as set forth above) during the Drive-In Worship service.
 - If you are sick, stay home.
 - Participants (other than worship leaders) should be in the cab of their vehicles at all times.
 - No sitting on vehicles or in the beds of trucks or in chair outside of the vehicle.
 - No lawn chairs or blankets.

- **Communication.**
 - Send out the communication to your members with the service times and the rules for attendance.
 - Post the communication on your website along with the rules for attendance. If you don't have a website, post it on whatever social media platform you use.
 - No bulletins will be given out. Consider providing digital material for services ahead of time, including posting your bulletin on your website or social media platform and/or emailing your members the bulletin.

- **Interaction with volunteers and clergy.**
 - Other than dropping offering into a receptacle provided by a volunteer standing 6 feet from the vehicle, (for instance, with a bucket on a broomstick), there will not be any exchange of anything between those members and guests in their vehicles and the volunteers, staff, and clergy.

- **Enforcement.**
 - Plan for the enforcement of these requirements.
 - Enforcement of rules, requirements, and protocols for everyone.

XI. Drive-In Worship: Questions and Answers.

- **Registration.**

Q. Why do I have to register to attend my own church?

A. We need to know how many are planning to attend so the church can determine if it can accommodate all of the vehicles in one service. It is possible that multiple services may need to be offered if the demand is high. We are practicing physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) even when people will be in their vehicles. We are choosing to be very careful right now by having an empty space on each side of each vehicle at the Drive-In service. Using this protocol, some churches will have limited space.

- **Day of the Service.**

Q. Why do I have to take my temperature before attending a Drive-In Worship service?

A. Monitoring your temperature is a manner of self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms. Because we are placing the health and safety of our church members as a top priority, even if you will remain in your own vehicle during the entirety of the Drive-In Worship service, it is in the safety and best interest of all that you

stay home if you have a temperature to prevent inadvertent community spread.

Q. Why do I have to bring a face covering to a Drive-In Worship service?

A. The CDC recommends face coverings whenever out in public, and if there is an emergency and your need to leave your vehicle to interact with anyone, you need a face covering and you need to socially distance. Because we are placing the health and safety of our church members as a top priority, even if you will remain in your own vehicle during the entirety of the Drive-In Worship service, it is in the safety and best interest of all that you at least bring a face covering with you to prevent inadvertent community spread in the case of an emergency. You are not required to wear the face covering in your vehicle.

- **Service Logistics.**

Q. What can I expect for a drive-in worship service?

A. First, you must review all protocols and guidelines regarding the Drive-In service and familiarize yourself with the rules and how the service will be managed. You should prepare for the service by collecting the items you will need to bring with you (*i.e.* a face covering, hand sanitizer, Bible, etc.). As a reminder, restrooms will not be available during drive-in worship services, so you will need to plan ahead in this regard. On the day of the service, first check your temperature and ensure that it is below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit. If your temperature is above 100.4 or you otherwise feel ill or exhibit any of the known COVID-19 symptoms, do not attend the service and stay home or seek medical treatment. If, however, you have no symptoms, no fever, and feel well and healthy, travel to the designated location of the service in advance of the designated time.

Upon arrive at the church parking lot, you can expect to be greeted by volunteers (who have been pre-assessed and who will be wearing face coverings) near the entrance of the parking lot. These volunteers will direct you to a parking spot where you may park your vehicle. Parking spots may be marked off in advance so that you leave adequate spacing in between cars, but in all circumstances, make sure there is no vehicle parked beside you on the driver's side and passenger side. To the extent possible, please avoid rolling down your window to speak with the volunteers or if you do roll down your window to speak to someone, put on your face covering and make sure the volunteer or anyone is 6 feet or more from you. COVID-19 is passed with respiratory droplets.

Once parked, tune your radio to the station from which the service will be broadcast (if the service is to be broadcast via radio), or use your phone to tune in and roll down your windows to hear the outdoor audio. **DO NOT** get out of your vehicle under any circumstances.

The clergy may lead the service from the parking lot or any combination of from the parking area and from the church. At the end of the service, the volunteers will help direct traffic out of the parking lot.

Q. What type of service?

A. It is up to each individual church whether to provide a traditional service, contemporary service, or a blended service during Drive-In Worship. The Healthy Church Team should make the decision as to the type of service. For larger, more populous congregations, multiple services may be feasible, which can allow for varying service types.

- **Emergency Services.**

Q. Why do we need emergency services?

A. The health and safety of our members, volunteers, staff, and clergy is our topmost priority. In the midst of a global pandemic, emergency services may be necessary if someone is ill at a service.

- **Parking.**

Q. What happens if we reach capacity in the parking lot?

A. The parking lot should never be completely filled if people will voluntarily let the church know they are attending the service. If the parking lot fills using this spacing protocol, then you may be forced to ask attendees to go to another location or return home. Under no circumstance should physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) protocols or capacity limits be ignored or broken because the demand is higher than the supply of parking spaces.

- **Assessment of Volunteers and Staff.**

Q. How will volunteers be selected?

A. Because the health and safety of our churches is the utmost priority, the selection of healthy and non-vulnerable volunteers is crucial. It is very important that all prospective volunteers self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, sore throat, headache, muscle pain, gastrointestinal issues, chills, and new loss of taste and/or smell). Anyone who presents with these symptoms or feels sick will not be selected to volunteer. Vulnerable individuals (i.e. persons over age 65 and/or those with pre-existing medical conditions), will not be selected as volunteers due to the increased risk of serving as a volunteer.

Q. What if I want to volunteer?

A. If you wish to volunteer, notify your Healthy Church Team and/or follow the procedure outlined in any communications sent by your church regarding volunteering. Once you volunteered, begin self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms, including checking your temperature each day. When volunteering, wear a face covering at all times, bring hand sanitizer with you, and maintain strict physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others). Do not touch your face and avoid unnecessary contact with other volunteers. If you live or are quarantined with other persons, we recommend you create a changing station at your home – somewhere near an entrance or exit where you can wash your hands and face, remove all shoes and garments worn while volunteering and change into clean garments, and properly store soiled garments before entering your home or common space.

Q. What if I want to volunteer?

A. If you wish to volunteer to assist with Drive-In Worship, notify your Healthy Church Team and/or follow the procedure outlined in any communications sent by your church regarding volunteering. All persons selected to volunteer will undergo training on proper use of personal protective equipment (“PPE”). Once you volunteered, begin self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms, including checking your temperature each day. When volunteering, wear a face covering at all times, bring hand sanitizer with you, and maintain strict physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others). Do not touch your face and avoid unnecessary contact with other volunteers. If you live or are quarantined with other persons, we recommend you create a changing station at your home – somewhere near an entrance or exit where you can wash your hands and face, remove all shoes and garments worn while volunteering and change into clean garments, and properly store soiled garments before entering your home or common space.

- **Facilities.**

Q. What if I need to use the restroom?

A. Unfortunately, due to physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) and sanitation needs, we cannot open restrooms during Drive-In services. Should you or anyone in your vehicle need to use the restroom during the service, we ask that you leave the drive-in service in the least disruptive manner.

Q. Why are restrooms not open to members and guests?

A. Unfortunately, due to physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) and sanitation needs, we cannot open restrooms during Drive-In services. We do not want the building accessed by anyone and we are concerned about

physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) while waiting in line and physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) in the actual restroom area.

- **Physical Social Distancing.**

Q. Why can't we get out of our vehicles and sit in lawn chairs in front of our vehicle or in one of the open spaces on each side our vehicle?

A. Requiring attendees to remain in their vehicles will help prevent the airborne spread of COVID-19 and other viruses and will allow congregants to gather in fellowship while adhering to the current public health protocols and capacity limits.

Q. Can I open my car windows?

A. Depending on how the service is conducted, attendees should limit the spread of germs and viruses to those outside their family members or fellow quarantined individuals as much as possible. If the service is streamed via a local radio station or on the internet, keeping the vehicle's windows and doors closed, weather permitted, is the safest option. If, however, the service is broadcast outside, attendees may open their windows, but are otherwise advised to reasonably limit their open-air exposure.

- **Communication.**

Q. What should be in the communication to our members?

A. Give your church members as much information about the Drive-In service and what to expect as possible. Include not only the time, location, and service type, but list out all rules, requirements, and protocols, including capacity limits, physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) requirements, etc. Provide maps and diagrams as necessary, and include alternative options for attending the service (i.e. through livestream). Advise the congregants what to bring with them (i.e. a Bible, AM/FM radio, etc.), and include links to any electronic materials or other services (i.e., an offering link, and link to livestream the service, etc.). Provide a contact person and contact information for members to raise any questions or concerns they may have. Ultimately, the members should be well-informed to build trust and process the plan.

- **Interaction with volunteers and clergy.**

Q. Why can't we have a paper bulletin?

A. Unfortunately, due to physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) and sanitation needs, we cannot ensure a safe method of distributing paper

bulletins. Consider providing the bulletin information electronically instead, via your website, emails to members, and/or on social media.

- **Enforcement.**

Q. What will the church or Conference do to enforce these requirements, rules, and protocols?

A. In the event an attendee fails to follow the Drive-In Worship requirements, rules, and protocols, that attendee will be denied access and/or asked to leave. If the person refuses to leave, the service will immediately end and everyone will leave the parking lot. The person that violates these requirements, rules, and protocols will not be allowed back on church property until he/she agrees to comply with all of the requirements, rules, and protocols. Safety of everyone is of utmost importance and we will not allow anyone to endanger the safety of our members, guests, and the community.

XII. Attachment C—Limited In-Person Worship.

A. Strict Protocol Requirements: Generally.

- **Individual Safety**
 - Sick must stay home
 - Face coverings required
 - Disposable gloves for Greeters, Ushers, Communion Helpers, counters if available
 - Sanitizer stations will not be in churches for members and guests. Individuals need to bring their own personal hand sanitizer.
 - Strict physical distancing - 6 feet or more at all times
 - Hymnals, Bibles, and all worship materials removed
 - No choirs
 - No singing - including Congregation
 - Worship only
 - Digital bulletin
 - Digital words for worship elements
 - No nursery or children's time
 - No coffee or fellowship time
 - No handshakes or hugging
 - Drop-off only (offering)
 - Communion (pre-packaged)³
 - No baptisms
 - No weddings
 - No funerals
 - Clean high touch areas
 - Physical distancing (6 feet or more) during dismissal⁴
 - Strict physical distancing in Sanctuary seating

- **Church Programming**
 - Gatherings of no more than 25 individuals (Stage 1 in Pioneer churches only) or 50 (Stage 2 if possible, as set forth above)
 - No in person Vacation Bible School
 - No large gatherings including revivals and camp meetings
 - No large outside gatherings
 - Continue livestream for most vulnerable
 - Childcare for essential/nonessential with physical distancing

B. Strict Protocol Requirements: Specifically for In-Person Worship.

- **Registration.**
 - All those that want to attend Drive-In Worship or a Pioneer church service must register with the church in advance.
 - Registration must be done **at least 4 days before** the service so there can be adequate planning.
 - There may need to be extra services added if the parking lot will be too full or if there is only one service, then it may have to be limited in how many can attend.
 - The Pioneer churches can only have 25 in-person and if there is a huge demand, the church may decide to hold multiple services.
 - In the Pioneer churches, we also want a record so we can follow up if someone tests positive for COVID-19 so proper contact tracing can take place. We also want to survey the members that attend an in-person service.

- **Health Acknowledgement.**
 - Review your own health using the Health Acknowledgment form and complete it online or if there is not an online presence for the church, then reply by email by completing your Health Acknowledgement form and sending it in to the church.
 - You can download the form from the Conference website at <https://vaumc.org/return>. Failure to complete this form will result in denied access to the church property.

- **Day of the Service.**
 - Before leaving to attend the limited in-person worship services, each attendee must:
 - Take his/her temperature. It must be less than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit in order to attend worship.
 - If you are feeling ill, stay home.
 - Bring with you a face covering, hand sanitizer, and gloves (if you feel you need them).

- **Cleaning Plan.**
 - Before churches can reopen to limited in-person worship services, each church must follow the guidelines for cleaning, sanitizing, and preparing their churches outlined in the Healthy Church Team Preparation Stage [Attachment A].

- **Service Logistics.**
 - Determine how you will provide the limited in-person service.
 - It's tempting to think of lots of ways to enhance the service, such as projecting the words on a screen, etc. But keep in mind, the more you do, then the more volunteers and equipment you require. The risk of exposure goes up when there are more people helping and more surfaces that can be touched by those setting up. Keep it all as simple as possible.
 - Determine who will be speaking and from where in advance. For example, the sharing of microphones is prohibited. Make plans for presentations based on any audio limitations.
 - Determine the type of service: traditional, contemporary, or a hybrid.
 - Determine whether you are also providing the service via Zoom, internet, or radio, how will this be conducted?
 - Reduce the length of worship services to allow for congregates come and go safely (if applicable)

- **Parking.**
 - Park so you can observe physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) can be maintained as attendees travel between their vehicles and the church building.
 - When leaving your vehicle upon arrival at the church, make sure to abide by physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others).
 - If someone is parked beside you, wait for them to get out of their vehicle and wait for them to get 6 feet away.
 - Put your face covering on before you leave your vehicle and keep it on until you are back in your vehicle.

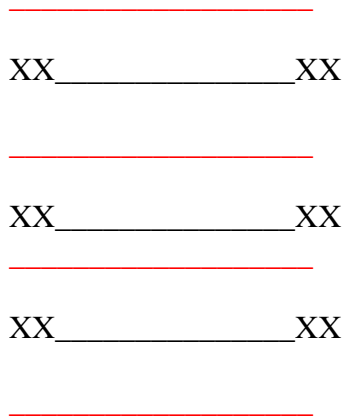
- **Assessment of Volunteers and Staff.**
 - Secure volunteers to direct parking and put up any signs needed.
 - Volunteers will be screened and asked questions about their health to ensure they are not ill.

- **Facilities.**
 - Determine whether to restrict access to certain areas of the church campus.
 - Keep nurseries, gym, classrooms, offices, kitchen, and playgrounds closed.
 - Develop a protocol for restrooms and determine how you it will be cleaned between uses or if that is practical. Physical social

distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) must be practiced.

- Coming and Going: Ensure proper physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) can be maintained in the entrance and exit, restrooms, and any other common spaces.
- **Physical Social Distancing.**
 - In order to limit attendance to the federal and state-enforced capacity limits, ask that attendees contact the church to let them know they are attending so churches can limit access or add services, or both.
 - This means everyone must stay at least 6 feet away from each other.
 - Family members that have been together the entire time are not required to be 6 feet apart.
 - If you are sick, stay home.
 - Everyone must wear a face covering the entire time in the service. If you cannot wear a face covering or you refuse to wear a face covering, you cannot attend in-person worship at this stage.

- **Seating.**
 - Attendees must sit 6-feet apart during the service.
 - Pew Seating. Everyone will sit as close to the aisle as possible at the end of each pew. There must be 6 feet between the people on each pew unless they are family members that have been together.
 - The pew in front of each person and the pew behind each person will be empty.
 - Here are how the pews need to be arranged, with the red pews representing empty pews and the “XX’s” marking where members and guests may sit:



- Wipe down all pews in the high touch areas after use.
- Fellowship Seating: If you would rather have seats in the fellowship hall and have worship there, then arrange chairs at least

6 feet apart from one another with common space for members to walk to and from their chairs while maintaining 6-foot social distancing.

- Set up any chairs while wearing gloves and wipe down chairs with cleaning agents after they are set up and before members arrive.

- **Communication.**
 - Send out the communication to your members with the service times and the rules for attendance.
 - Post the communication on your website along with the rules for attendance. If you don't have a website, post it on whatever social media platform you use.
 - No bulletins will be given out. Consider providing digital material for services ahead of time, including posting your bulletin on your website or social media platform and/or emailing your members the bulletin.

- **Interaction with volunteers and clergy.**
 - There will not be any exchange of anything between members and guests and the clergy.
 - There will be no paper bulletins.
 - There will be no material in the pew racks or on the pews or seats.
 - Drop off your offering in the common basket near the door.

- **Enforcement.** Plan for the enforcement of these requirements.
 - Churches that offer limited in-person worship services without helping all persons abide by them may face legal liability.

XIII. Limited In-Person Worship: Questions and Answers.

- **General Protocol.**

Q. Who decides which churches will be the Pioneer Churches?

A. The lead clergy general protocol.

Q. Who decides which churches will be the Pioneer Churches?

A. The lead clergy should consult with the District Superintendent and should consult with the Healthy Church Team (HCT) to determine if the church can be a Pioneer church or not. A number of considerations will be assessed, such as the COVID-19 spread in the community, flexibility and adaptability of the church members, the size of the congregation, the physical church campus and facilities, and the population types comprising the congregation (i.e. does the congregation have a large vulnerable population?). The Bishop has the ultimate decision if there is a dispute about which churches are Pioneer churches.

- Q. What if there is a dispute between the lead clergy and the Board of Trustees about being a Pioneer Church or when to re-open in different stages?
- A. The HCT will recommend to the lead clergy about being a Pioneer Church or when to re-open based on the various phases. The District Superintendent also has the authority to make the decision about whether a local church becomes a Pioneer Church or when the local church re-opens based on a number of factors. The Bishop has the discretion to order a church to open or close. The Board of Trustees cannot require the church to open or close. See ¶2533 of the 2016 Book of Discipline.
- Q. Why do attendees at limited in-person worship services have to wear face coverings? Will the clergy also be wearing face coverings?
- A. Everyone at the limited in-person worship services is required to wear a face covering at all times, including clergy. The CDC recommends face coverings whenever out in public and requiring attendees to wear a face covering will help prevent the airborne spread of COVID-19 and other viruses.
- Q. Why are children under 12 prohibited from attending in-person services?
- A. It is difficult to wear a face covering and most children under the age of 12 are not able to sit still in church and it is highly unlikely that most children will keep the face covering on when it gets hot or uncomfortable. If a child takes off his/her face covering, the service will end and everyone will be required to leave the property.
- Q. How do I know if I can wear a face covering or not?
- A. Everyone should practice wearing a face covering for several hours in the days leading up to the in-person service to ensure that every person can wear it for at least one hour. Practice is the best method. It is not easy to wear a face covering and it can be uncomfortable if you are not used to it.
- Q. What happens if a church goer refuses to wear a face covering, takes off a face covering in the service, violates the no-handshaking rule, or fails to follow other requirements, rules, and protocols?
- A. If the disobedience of the requirements, rules and protocols is willful – for example, if a church goer arrives at church without a face covering and is reminded to put on a face covering but overtly refuses – then the church will have to take all necessary measures to protect the other church goers regardless of whether the disobedient individual feels ill or is exhibiting any symptoms. First, the church will prohibit the disobeying individual from entering the church facility or building. If this fails to resolve the issue, the gathering will end

immediately and everyone will need to leave the property. The person that violates the requirements, rules, protocols, and guidelines will not be allowed back on church property until he/she agrees to comply with all of the requirements, rules, and protocols. While these measures may be extreme, they are necessary to protect the health and safety of everyone in attendance. Unfortunately one disobeying individual can present a significant risk to the larger group, and for this reason, churches must be steadfast in their enforcement of these guidelines.

If, in the alternative, the disobedience is unintentional – for example, if a church goer inadvertently sits within 6 feet from another, non-family member, or accidentally reaches out to shake another’s hand – then the church must address the issue by reminding the individual of the requirements, rules, protocols, and guidelines and asking the individual to comply with all physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) requirements. The church must directly address even these unintentional violations of requirements, rules, and protocols. All church goers should be aware that their refusal to comply with physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) requirements, even when reminded of the policy, will result in the church asking them to leave the premises. The church must be proactive in its enforcement of these requirements, rules, protocols, and guidelines, even when disobedience of them is unintentional, negligent, inadvertent or without ill will.

Q. What if a disabled member or guest wants to attend a Pioneer Church service but he/she cannot or will not keep a face covering on or will not or cannot exercise proper social distancing?

A. During the Pioneer Church stage, disabled members or guests that cannot or will not wear a face covering or keep a face covering on cannot attend in-person worship. Disabled members or guests that cannot or will not exercise proper social distancing also cannot attend in-person worship during the Pioneer stage. At the transition stage, disabled members and guests that cannot or will not wear a face covering or cannot or will not exercise proper social distancing, need to coordinate with the HCT and lead clergy to determine if they can attend in-person worship. The safety of everyone is the most important right now and it is not a reasonable accommodation to have a disabled person attend the first two stages of in-person worship if he/she cannot or will not abide by these basic safety requirements and rules.

Q. Can I shake another person’s hand if one of us is wearing gloves?

A. Unfortunately, no. Even if you both have protective gloves on, shaking someone’s hand means you have failed to keep the proper social distance between you – 6 feet. It is best to maintain 6 feet of social distancing at all times, even if you wish to welcome or greet your fellow worshippers.

Q. Why can't we sing or have the choir perform during the service?

A. Unfortunately, singing requires additional expelling of air, which may cause in an increase of airborne pathogens. Because COVID-19 can spread from person to person via these airborne pathogens even after the person has stopped singing, we are asking our churches to refrain from singing to help prevent further community spread of COVID-19. This same reasoning extends to the rationale behind no choirs during limited in-person worship services. Not only will the choir potentially add to the airborne pathogens, but they must also be accounted for under the strict capacity limitations.

- **Registration.**

Q. Why do I have to register to attend my own church?

A. We don't want to turn anyone away but if we don't know the numbers that are attending, we may have no choice. We are limited during Stage 1 and Stage 2 as to the numbers that can attend. All those that want to attend a church service must register with the church in advance. Registration must be done at least 4 days before the service so there can be adequate planning. There may need to be extra services added if there is a huge demand. We also want a record so we can follow up if someone tests positive for COVID-19 so proper contact tracing can take place. We also want to survey the members that attend an in-person service.

- **Day of the Service.**

Q. Why do I have to take my temperature before attending a limited in-person service?

A. Monitoring your temperature is a manner of self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms. Because we are placing the health and safety of our church members as a top priority, even if you do not feel ill, you may still have a temperature, and it is in the safety and best interest of all that you stay home if you do to prevent community spread of COVID-19.

- **Service Logistics.**

Q. What can I expect for a limited in-person worship service?

A. First, you must review all requirements, rules, and protocols regarding the limited in-person service and familiarize yourself with the rules and how the service will be managed. You will then need to register your attendance and complete the Health Acknowledgement form in advance of any limited in-person worship service you plan to attend. Once your registration is confirmed, you should prepare for the service by collecting the items you will need to bring with you (*i.e.*

a face covering, gloves, other personal protective equipment (“PPE”), hand sanitizer, Bible, etc.). On the day of the service, first check your temperature and ensure that it is below 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit. If your temperature is above 100.4 or you otherwise feel ill or exhibit any of the known COVID-19 symptoms, abort your plans of attending and stay home. If, however, you have no symptoms, no fever, and feel well and healthy, travel to the designated location of the service in advance of the designated time. Make sure everyone attending with you has pre-registered and been confirmed. Bring with you hand sanitizer, a face covering or other covering, any materials distributed by the church in advance (*i.e.* an electronic bulletin), and any materials you may need to enjoy the service (*i.e.* your Bible).

Some churches may mark parking spots in advance, in which case you should follow all signage. Before exiting your car, cover your face with your face covering and put on any other PPE you brought with you.

After exiting your car, walk towards the designated entrance (there should only be one, and it will be marked with signage. This may be a different entrance than you typically use when attending church). Maintain physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) at all times. When you enter the building, follow all signage or instructions from volunteers. Signs may explain the requirements and rules or people may do it verbally. Even if you see an old friend, avoid all hugging and handshaking. There will be no bulletins, coffee, or other shareable items. A volunteer may direct you to your set, but regardless you should sit at least 6 feet apart from other church goers (excluding your family or those in your quarantine group). If the seating is in pews, do not scoot by persons already sitting in the pew. Sit in every other pew, closest to an aisle or the end of the row. There will be no material in the pew racks or on the pews or seats.

Once the service begins, follow the clergy person’s instructions at all times, including for any offerings, communion, or other parts of worship. There will be no singing, only worship, during the service. At the conclusion of the service, dismissal will be conducted orderly and slowly so that all persons can maintain proper physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others). Exit the building via the designated entrance, and maintain all physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) protocol until you return to your vehicle. Should you need to use the building’s restroom at any time, please maintain physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) and thoroughly wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.

Q. What type of service?

A. It is up to each individual church whether to provide a traditional service, contemporary service, or hybrid service during limited in-person worship. The Healthy Church Team should make the decision as to the type of service. For

larger, more populous congregations, multiple services may be feasible, so long as proper sanitization and cleaning protocols are adhered to in between each service.

Q. What about ancillary services, like the choir, nursery, Sunday School, etc.?

A. There will not be these services in Stage 1 and 2.

Q. How will communion be administered?

A. Should churches wish to administer communion during a limited in-person worship service, they must be able to do so awhile adhering to physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) protocol and through use of pre-packaged communion packages.

- **Parking.**

Q. Why may we be asked to park spaced apart for limited in-person worship services if we do not plan to remain in our vehicles?

A. Church attendees must park in a manner that allows them to maintain proper physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) at all times, including entering and exiting their vehicles in the church parking lot.

- **Assessment of Volunteers and Staff.**

Q. How will volunteers be selected?

A. Because the health and safety of our churches is the utmost priority, the selection of healthy and non-vulnerable volunteers is crucial. It is very important that all prospective volunteers self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, sore throat, headache, muscle pain, gastrointestinal issues, chills, and new loss of taste and/or smell). Anyone who presents with these symptoms or feels sick will not be selected to volunteer. Vulnerable individuals (i.e. persons over age 65 and/or those with pre-existing medical conditions), will not be selected as volunteers due to the increased risk of serving as a volunteer.

Q. What if I want to volunteer?

A. If you wish to volunteer, notify your Healthy Church Team and/or follow the procedure outlined in any communications sent by your church regarding volunteering. Once you volunteered, begin self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms, including checking your temperature each day. When volunteering, wear a face covering at all times, bring hand sanitizer with you, and maintain strict physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others). Do not touch your face and avoid unnecessary contact with other volunteers. If you live or are quarantined with other persons, we recommend you create a changing

station at your home – somewhere near an entrance or exit where you can wash your hands and face, remove all shoes and garments worn while volunteering and change into clean garments, and properly store soiled garments before entering your home or common space.

- **Facilities.**

Q. What if I need to use the restroom?

A. The restrooms will be open to members and guests during in-person services, but strict physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) must be maintained at all times. All attendees are further required to wash their hands (for 20 seconds or more with soap and warm water), after using the restroom, and should minimize the common surfaces they touch during their use of the restroom.

Q. Why do we need to designate a separate entrance and exit?

A. Designating one entrance separate and apart from the sole-designated exist will allow churches to maintain physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) requirements and limit the spread of germs and viruses among attendees.

- **Physical Social Distancing.**

Q. What happens if we reach capacity?

A. All in-person services require advance registration or sign-up so that capacity limits can be maintained. This may require churches to turn away some members who wish to attend in-person, an unfortunate consequence. However, churches should communicate their capacity limitations to their members well in advance of any in-person service so that members are aware of the requirements, expectations, and consequences. The reasoning behind these strict rules – the health and safety of everyone involved – should also be communicated to members so there is a general understanding of why the church is limiting attendance. Under no circumstance should physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) protocols or capacity limits be ignored or broken.

- **Seating.**

Q. Why do we have to space the seating out so far?

A. Requiring attendees to maintain strict physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) will help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses and will allow congregants to gather in fellowship while adhering to the current public health protocols and capacity limits.

- **Communication.**

Q. What should be in the communication to our members?

A. Give your church members as much information about the in-person service and what to expect as possible. Include not only the time, location, and service type, but list out all limitations and protocols, including capacity limits, physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) requirements, etc. Provide maps and diagrams as necessary, and include alternative options for attending the service (i.e. through livestream). Advise the congregants what to bring with them (i.e. a Bible), and include links to any electronic materials or other services (i.e., an offering link, and link to livestream the service, etc.). Provide a contact person and contact information for members to raise any questions or concerns they may have. Ultimately, the members should be well-informed to build trust and process the plan.

- **Interaction with volunteers and clergy.**

Q. Why can't we have a paper bulletin, pew Bibles, or Hymnals?

A. Unfortunately, due to physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others) and sanitation needs, we cannot ensure a safe method of distributing and using paper bulletins, pew Bibles, and Hymnals. Consider projecting the information or providing the information electronically instead, via your website, emails to members, and/or on social media.

- **Enforcement.**

Q. What will the church do to enforce these requirements, rules, protocols, and guidelines?

A. In the event an attendee fails to follow these requirements, rules, protocols, and guidelines, including, but not limited to, the requirements for pre-worship self-monitoring, pre-registration, parking rules, facility use, and physical social distancing (stay 6 feet or more away from others), that attendee will be denied access and/or asked to leave. If an attendee refuses to abide by the rules after being asked to do so, the church must immediately end the service and send all attendees home. The person that violates the requirements, rules, protocols, and guidelines will not be allowed back on church property until he/she agrees to comply with all of the requirements, rules, and protocols. The health and safety of our churches is the utmost priority, and ensuring everyone abides by the requirements, rules, protocols, and guidelines help protect everyone's health and safety.

Q. What if someone becomes sick?

A. If any church member, volunteer, staff person, employee, or clergy member develops symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), that person should immediately be separated from other persons, and if on church property at the time, sent home. The HCT should consider developing procedures for safely transporting anyone sick to their home or to a healthcare facility.

If the sick individual has had any contact with the church or other church members, that individual must notify the church's HCT, who will then notify local health officials and church staff and members. Volunteers will then close off any areas used by the sick person until after those areas have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Cleaning should be done at least 24 hours after the sick individual used or visited the infected area.

The HCT will then instruct those who had close contact with the sick person, in the event the sick individual is diagnosed with COVID-19, to stay home and self-quarantine for at least 14 days, to self-monitor for symptoms, and to follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.

Q. What is the church doing to monitor for COVID-19?

A. Each church will rely on its congregations to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. Each church should also instruct its congregations to promptly notify the church if any symptoms of COVID-19 develop, and to self-quarantine and isolate (*i.e.* do not come to church) for at least 14 after the last possible exposure to the virus. Those churches with the resources to do so may consider conducting routine, daily health checks (*e.g.* temperature and symptoms screening) of all church employees.

XIV. Attachment D– New Normal Protocol.

- **Continue Health Church Team**

- **Individual Safety**
 - Sick must stay home
 - Face coverings optional
 - Disposable gloves for Greeters, Ushers, Communion Helpers, Counters
 - Sanitizer stations will not be in churches for members and guests. Individuals need to bring their own personal hand sanitizer.
 - Moderate physical distancing
 - Normal sanctuary seating
 - Normal choirs resume (optional)
 - Regular worship and singing
 - Resume nursery, children’s ministry, Sunday school
 - Coffee or fellowship time resumes
 - Handshakes or hugging (optional)
 - Plate passing/drop-off offering
 - Regular communion
 - Normal baptisms, weddings and funerals
 - Clean high touch areas
 - Normal distancing
 - Childcare resumes

- **Church Programming**
 - Unlimited individuals
 - Physical distancing vacation Bible School
 - Normal large gathering
 - Normal large church gathering
 - Summer camps optional
 - Preschool resumes (optional)
 - Continue Live-Stream for the Cautious
 - Drive-by food distribution prepared by health department approved church kitchen
 - Blood drives resume
 - Hosting drive-thru Covid-19 testing
 - Continue the Healthy Church Team

New Normal: Questions and Answers

- Q. Why aren't there more details of the protocol and guidelines for Stage 3, the New Normal?
- A. Because we plan to monitor our progress through the Preparation Stage and Stages 1 and 2 and adjust and edit our protocol as necessary. There are simply too many unknowns at this time. We will learn from the earlier stages what works, what doesn't work, and what needs improvement, in order to tailor better-suited protocol details for Stage 3 closer to the time we enter Stage 3.