



LOVING OTHERS TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST

Plan for Re-opening Worship at First Presbyterian Church of Stuart

The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Stuart (FPS-Stuart) has decided that safety is of the utmost importance when considering the reopening of worship. The Session recognizes that everyone should feel comfortable in their decision regarding when to return to in person worship. Following a reopening planning guide prepared by the Presbytery of Tropical Florida, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and a survey of FPC-Stuart friends and members, the Session has created a plan to begin live worship while making accommodations where friends and members of the Church can remain at home and still participate in a live worship service.

Communication of the efforts and plans the Session has made is not only essential, but difficult. Email and postal mail to membership and friends will be used, not because of their simplicity, but because of their availability to distribute *accurate* information quickly. All members will be individually called to spread the news of our reopening and to ensure that such news will be shared accurately and quickly to those who do not own computers. There are plans to also send out postcards to the local community.

The Phased-In Plan

First Presbyterian Church of Stuart will once again begin worshipping publicly on June 21, 2020. A phased-in, in-person worship service has been planned.

Ensuring A Safe Worship

The Church will follow CDC guidelines regarding the frequent cleaning and disinfecting the campus as a whole and the sanctuary in particular. Frequently touched surfaces will be disinfected at least daily and any shared objects in between uses.

We have developed a schedule of increased, routine cleaning and disinfection by avoiding the use of items that are not easily cleaned, sanitized, or disinfected, thus ensuring the safe and correct application of disinfectants by keeping them away from children and congregants whose health is impaired.

FPC-Stuart's plan for when a staff member or congregant becomes ill is to follow CDC guidelines by creating an area on the campus to separate anyone who exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 during hours of operation. Further, all children are not to be left without adult supervision at any time during services, meetings, or visiting on FPC-Stuart's campus.¹

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>

The Church will ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, etc.

Exposure Remediation

In the unlikely event that a staff member or congregant is identified with COVID-19 symptoms, they will immediately and safely be transported to their home or a healthcare facility. Local health officials will be immediately notified if a person diagnosed with the virus has been in the facility and we will communicate with staff and congregants about potential exposure while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or other applicable laws and in accordance with religious practices.

Those with [exposure](#) to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 will be advised to [stay home and self-monitor](#) for 14 days for symptoms, and follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop. All areas used by the [ill](#) person will be closed off and not used until after a thorough cleaning and disinfection.²

Upon Entering and Leaving the Sanctuary

The CDC encourages the use of cloth face coverings among staff and congregants. FPC-Stuart plans to encourage congregants to wear masks into the sanctuary. If they do not have one, masks will be available.³ To further ensure safety, prior to entry each congregant will have their temperature scanned; those with high temperatures will be asked to find COVID-19 site for testing. Upon receipt of a negative report, congregants be allowed back to worship.

Entrance to the sanctuary will only be allowed through the front doors. These doors will remain open during the entire duration of worship.

Upon entry, ushers will escort the congregants to designated seats in the sanctuary, filling the front seats first according to a seating chart. Congregants wearing masks will sit on the left side of the sanctuary. If for whatever reason congregants refuse to wear masks, they will be seated on the right side of the sanctuary where seating has been further separated.

Pews in the sanctuary have been marked and numbered with the first two and the last two pews remaining empty for social-distancing purposes. Every other row has been blocked and red tape has been marked in the pews where congregants will sit to ensure non-family members remain at least six feet apart.

When entering the sanctuary through the front doors, the floors have been marked for one-way foot traffic. Entering the sanctuary to the pews will be done through the center aisle. Exiting the sanctuary will be done as mark using the outside aisles. Ushers will release congregants from the

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>

³ *ibid*

sanctuary at the conclusion of worship beginning with the back pews. Each congregant is asked to maintain social distancing while exiting and only use the door assigned to his/her section.

FPC-Stuart's sanctuary space is large enough to hold one service with normal attendance. A second service may be planned if we find a need to turn people away from the first service due to space limitations. If there is a second service, the first service will begin at 10:00AM and second service will begin at Noon. Between services all pews will be wiped with antibacterial wipes.

There is hand sanitizer at every exit of the sanctuary. Congregants will be asked to use it when entering and leaving the sanctuary.

Individual bulletins will not be available but the order of worship provided on the screens in the front of the sanctuary.

Regarding On-line Worship: The Session has also invested in equipment that will provide live-streaming capabilities, so persons who cannot attend will still able to be a part of the service. If live streaming is not available, we will fall back on our recorded messages as in the past.

Worship Services: Music, Lord's Supper, and Baptisms

The music ministry will continue to function in a programmed manner. All choral music will follow CDC guidelines for social distancing, with singers placed and maintaining a six-foot distancing between and within groups. Further protection will be maintained by not seating congregants in the first two pew rows, thus ensuring that any virus dispersal through singing will not impact on congregants.

Worship services will include *Lord's Supper*. Trays will not be passed in the pews. A cup with bread, all in one container, will be made available. Ushers will invite people to come forward to insure the maintenance of social distancing. The Pastor is only one to share communion and will a mask and gloves

Baptisms will also be a part of worship services, but parents will be asked to hold the child and apply holy water for baptism as the Pastor proclaims the Trinitarian formula. Extended family and others will not be invited forward to limit the number of people at the font.

Order of Worship Changes

Several changes in how the worship session is carried out are necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular:

- Passing of the Peace and/or "Meet and Greet" will cease for the foreseeable future.
- There will be no passing of offering plates. Offertory baskets will be placed at the end of the two outside aisles and available when congregants exit the sanctuary.

- All Christian Education classes will be held via ZOOM until further notice.
- Childcare and Children's Church has been suspended until further notice.
- The after service Friendship Hour has been suspended until further notice.

Sanitation Between Services

The Session has hired a cleaning crew that will come in first thing on Monday to sanitize the sanctuary and campus and return on Friday to repeat in preparation for the upcoming worship service.

"Clean at Noon" and any other organizations that use the facilities will need cleaning teams to follow them. Wipes and disinfectants will be made available to facilitators.

Summary

First Presbyterian Church of Stuart is committed to the spreading of the Word in a number of ways. Most important to FPC-Stuart is the in-person worship experience, but an experience which ensures the safety of all. In this time of pandemic FPC-Stuart is doing all it can to be Church home, whether in-person, recorded, or live-streamed worship. The plan outlined above has been created based on input from congregational members and friends who responded to an earlier survey of reopening FPC-Stuart for worship. It meets and exceeds the requirements placed on us by local, state, and national governance and follows the recommendations of the Center for Disease Control. We look forward to once again worshipping with you beginning June 21st!

— The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Stuart.