

The Worship Center
176 S Main Str.
Mt Clemens, MI 4803
www.worshipcentered.org

Guidelines Reopening / Returning to Church

Please note: The Worship Center Leadership is in constant contact with the Governor's Office via Facebook, Twitter, Michigan.gov and following daily televised press conferences. It is the governor's recommendation that churches continue to proceed only with drive-in services or online.

(Specific to Michigan) We must still follow the Guidelines of the Shelter-in-Place / Shut down order that is still in effect until June 12th, 2020. See the last two pages for the requirements. For more on the Shelter-in-Place Order visit:
https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/0,9309,7-387-90499_90705-526894--,00.html

We must decide what is best for our partners, community and our culture. If you have specific questions, please don't hesitate to ask, but understand that not every answer will apply to everyone and we may not have the answer to every question. Somethings we will have to simply apply faith. Please note that if you have any hesitancy, anxiety, or fear on returning to the building, it is better for you to wait. There is no rush to get back to the building, although we are looking forward to that day!

We encourage you to follow and consider these guidelines. These are considerations, not mandates.

BE INFORMED

Know the risk factors for the virus. Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. This can help use make decisions on staffing, volunteers, and whether we will return sooner or later. For example, those with preexisting conditions and those over 65 years old are at a higher risk of experiencing worse symptoms than others if they contract the virus.

Soliciting our partners for what their expectations are regarding returning to church. This is key!! We have also attached a survey to help us meet the needs of community, families and partners. Being in constant communication with our partners will ease their emotions along with reduce fear and anxiety. By soliciting their input, we are actually empowering them to be part of the planning process. We can continue doing online services if our partners are still experiencing anxiety and fear. However, we would definitely need to find out what that percentage is.

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PREPARE OUR CHURCH

- Recommend phasing partners returning, first leaders, then volunteers followed by partners. Each group separated by 15, 30- or 45-day increments.
- Soliciting volunteers and establishing a weekly project / task workload to ensure project is moving forward, people are involved, and a buzz created. Recommend three days per week two hours per day.
- Deep clean the entire church. Where will germs be transferred? Extra safety precautions could be shampooing carpets, sanitizing pews, bathrooms, doorknobs, light switches, and microphones.
- Use prescribed, reliable chemicals and disinfectants as directed by CDC, federal, state and local agencies and allow for the proper dry times. Click this link for approved COVID 19 cleaners and disinfectors;
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- Strategic focal point is the preschool and children's areas. Actions could include removing everything nonessential from the room to limit surfaces for potential contamination and do a thorough cleaning in between uses. Please see the preschool/children section for more information to consider.
- Remove Bibles, hymnals, pens, connection cards, etc.
- Post signs about not shaking hands and doing non-contact greetings. We can promote the hashtag **#itsoktosmileandwave**. Purchasing decorative church banners is a great option.
- Hand sanitizer stations placed in the lobby, sanctuary and each classroom.
- Placing of six feet spacing blocks in our sanctuary, classrooms, and lobby area to ensure social distancing. Tape, remove chairs, or rows and use cones, etc. to indicate the distance needed along with flow of traffic.
- Convey to our partners through flyers on the doors, email, and social media about how we've prepared the church for their arrival. Be sure to use the words "clean, safe, and mindful of health needs and issues in preparation for a non-touch experience" or something similar. Also say that if they are sick, then they should not be present and can join online instead.
- Collaborate with the building manager for repairs or adjustment needed beyond our scope.

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Service Times & Locations

- Keep our online meeting option for those who are afraid or unable to attend our service in person. Some churches have seen a spike in engagement since their online presence has increased. Something to consider. We currently don't have a mechanism in place to track our online participation.
- We can offer multiple services to encourage a greater chance of social distancing. One way to ensure our services are evenly spread is to have people sign up for a service. We can use Facebook events or our website and have people mark which service they'll attend.
- Remember that if we have multiple services, we will need to clean between each service. We can shorten the service time to help with the timing of cleaning thoroughly. Option of multiple services during the week will allow for cleaning in between service times.
- Determine how many volunteers you have available to assist. Limit volunteers to those who do not have preexisting conditions and those who are under 65 years old.
- [View our Back to Church Process](#)

Worship Services

- Celebrate the return! Hopefully we have some time to plan a Comeback Service. Encourage praise, provide times of testimony, and a sermon that spurs people to embrace life changes God has revealed to them during the quarantine.
- If our partners are from the same household, they can sit together. Consider spacing out other groups. Reference the preparation section of this document.
- Remember to avoid handing out bulletins, and instead project all announcements on screens. Also do not allow people to come by and pick up bulletins out of stacks
- Change the way we offer the communion. Avoid passing a plate or bowl. Combined elements of communion can be picked up as people enter – but make sure that people are not picking from a deep bowl.
- Avoid passing microphones on the stage.
- Continue offering online giving options. Have stations in the church where people can drop offerings instead of passing a plate.

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- Come up with a fun way to greet others in a no-contact way.
- Clean the pulpit after every use.
- Consider dismissing in an orderly way to ensure there is social distancing.
- [View our Back to Church Process](#)

AMENITIES: COFFEE, BULLETINS, AND HAND SANITIZER

- Restrooms will have to potentially be cleaned before service but defiantly after service.
- Do not hand out bulletins. Do not allow people to come by and pick them up out of stacks.
- Withholding coffee stations, donuts, or groups meals at this time is recommended.
- Post signs about washing hands in bathrooms with appropriate guidelines on how to so.
- Display hand sanitizer throughout the church. It may be difficult to obtain at this point.
- Partners, who want to wear a mask will not be refused, judged or condemned for doing so.

STAFF: GREETERS AND VOLUNTEERS

- Provide security and enlist ushers to be both inside and outside greeters. Instruct them on how to greet post- quarantine: NO hand shaking or hugs.
- Ensure doors are propped open or have the greeters hold them open.
- Greeters and Volunteers should be able to answer questions on procedures and policies upon the return to the building. Train them beforehand if possible.
- Consider a temperature check on all staff and volunteers.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND SMALL GROUPS

- The Governor's office is recommending that you have your church members enter the building and immediately go into the worship service to be seated. For more information, see the "Worship Services" section.

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- Consider whether you will have Worship U or small groups (see previous point). Make sure we are communicating if and when these classes will resume.
- Consider dividing our classes to maintain the social distancing standards.
- If we do have class, please know we should clean the doorknobs, water fountains, and other high traffic areas in between uses.
- Have a plan for our leaders and teachers. Will they discuss what God revealed to them in the quarantine? Will we encourage a prayer and praise time?
- If we don't have class, make sure we have provided an outline for your teachers and leaders to continue engagement for your groups. This is still an excellent time to build classes and community and enhance learning.
- [View our Back to Church Process](#)

PRESCHOOL AND CHILDREN

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children 2 years of age and under do not wear masks or face coverings. Please keep this in mind as you make decisions.
- Providing parents and partners with a checklist prior to attending services. Checklist should include post COVID 19 criteria's
- Pre-register children to limit how many are in any room at a time. A four-child limit in each room at first. Additionally, option could be using overflow rooms.
- Limit leaders in the preschool and children's areas to those who do not have pre-existing conditions. Also limit leaders to those under 65 years old.
- Have extra volunteers to help in the preschool ministry where some children may suffer from separation anxiety after only being with parents for a long time.
- Have a check list of what's been cleaned and when in each room.
- Develop a list of procedures for your volunteers. Train them on this list through Zoom prior to the first meeting.

CHOIRS, ORCHESTRAS, PRAISE TEAMS, BANDS, ETC.

- Praise Teams: Do not use the full team. Consider rotations. Assign microphones and use the same one every time.

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- Space members out appropriately (consider using a diamond pattern with six feet of spacing between members)
- Wipe down music stands, soundboards, microphones etc. after each use
- Dismiss the worship team in a fashion to allow distancing

TECH TEAMS

- Clean microphones, headphones, computers, laptops, etc. after every use. Keep a record of when each item was cleaned. DO NOT use water. Rubbing alcohol or alcohol-based cleaners are best.
- Rotate our tech team if possible. Again, encourage those who feel sick or run down to not come into the service.

Preparing for The Return (Begins immediately)

Phase one return to church will consist of the following steps

- Cleaning the church
- Reconfiguration of sanctuary and classrooms
- Placing sign and banners within the restrooms, lobby area, sanctuary etc
- Directional markings and social distance marking
- Setting up hand sanitizer stations
- Purchasing cleaning supplies for continued cleaning purposes
- Preparing information packets for our partners
- Launching survey

Phase I Return to Church (*3 weeks after ban is lifted)

***Recommend**

- Leadership only return (Pastor, Elders, Ministers, Worship Leader)
- Proofing the concept and making the adjustments
- Data collection and mining
- Continue online services, giving etc.
- Children's virtual bible study launch (**Coming June 2020**)

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- Continue food pantry support (increase promoting via social media)
- Begin development of “How to Fellowship Action Plan”
- Marketing

Phase II Return to Church (*6 weeks after ban is lifted)

- Volunteers only may return
- Continue online services, giving, etc.
- Continue data collection and mining
- Continue children’s virtual bible study
- Training our volunteers
- Continue to proof the concept and make adjustments.
- Continue food pantry and providing local assistance
- Share the “How to Fellowship Action Plan”
- Continue marketing

Phase III the Launch (*9 weeks after ban is lifted)

- Partners, guest friends are allowed to return
- Celebrate the return!!
- Continue online services
- Children’s virtual bible study for fearful, concerned or worried parents
- Execute and work the “How to Fellowship Action Plan”
- Continue making adjustments. As more people come you will see more opportunities for improvement develop.
- [View our Back to Church Process](#)

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Th Worship Center