

In-Person Worship Resumes August 16

Borrowing from the VA Conference United Methodist Bishop, Sharma Lewis, "These are certainly challenging times - and there is also a great deal of positive news for our church. Through faith, flexibility, and hard work we are returning to in-person worship in a safe and responsible manner."

I want to thank the Healthy Church Team (Gordon & Carol Vincent, Bev & Al McMath, Therese Denston, Dick Jenkins, Page Ross, Don Bowling, Michael Teets, Patty Bergquist, Sandy Savage and Butch Harmon) who have worked diligently to arrive at a reopening plan that is safe, feasible and conforms with our conference guidelines. The plan has been approved by our District Superintendent, Alex Joyner, for Onley United Methodist Church to worship together in-person beginning **August 16th**.

Because of these safety precautions, several things will be different when attending worship services during this phase of operation.

Entering and Leaving the Church

- Parking will be arranged to allow people to get out of cars without getting too close to other people getting out at the same time. You may park on East Main Street or behind the church.
- Enter the parking lot by turning into Church Street and then turning into the parking lot. Please do not enter the lot from the driveway on East Main Street.
- There will be no parking in the small lot near the Kitchen, and no parking along Church Street.
- Parking spaces closest to the sidewalk will be reserved for people who need to use the ramp. Others will park in line - one car behind the others. We are avoiding side-by-side parking.
- You must wear a mask at all times, from the time you leave your car until you return to your car after the service.
- As you move toward the entrance, keep at least eight feet between you and the parties ahead of you. If the line is slow, do not move ahead and gather in a group. Instead, stop and wait for the line to move. Keep least eight feet from those ahead of you at all times.
- Entry will be allowed by the ramp for those who need to use it. Everyone else will enter through the main entrance at the back of the Sanctuary.
- All other entrances will be locked.
- At the entrance, a volunteer will take your temperature using a non-contact thermometer. If your temperature exceeds 100.4 degrees, you will not be allowed to enter. You will also be



asked if you have any Covid-19 symptoms, or if you have been exposed to anyone with Covid-19.

- We need to observe social distancing in seating. The ushers will direct each person or family group to available seats, in order of entry. If seats are available, you may request to sit in the general area where you usually sit, but your customary pew may not be available.
- When leaving, wait in your seats until the ushers signal you to leave. Those who use the ramp will leave first, and must keep social distancing as they move along.
- The ushers will then signal each person or family group to leave, one at a time, using the opening in the large Sunday School room doors, or the rear side door. We will move slowly toward the exit steps leading down to Church Street. Keep at least eight feet between you and the person or group in front of you. Slow down or stop if you must, to maintain the safe distance.
- The rules require that we exit by a different door than the one used for entering. (Using the ramp must be an exception to this.) Therefore, even if you parked on East Main Street, you may not leave from the rear Sanctuary doors.
- As you move through the sidewalk to your cars, remember to keep at least eight feet between you and the group ahead of you. Be patient.

During the Service

- Face covering should be worn at all times.
- Bulletins will be sent to you in an email, please print for yourself or feel free to bring your tablet or smart phone to access the order of worship (please remember to silence your ringers).
- Wi-Fi is available in the Sanctuary (the password will be provided).
- The hymnals and Bibles have been removed from the pews for the time being.
- The hymn lyrics will be in the emailed order of worship.
- Music will be played but no singing is allowed. You may hum, or sing to yourself (no one should hear you – similar to humming)
- I know we have not seen one another for quite some time, but, we need to refrain from hugs and handshakes and all other physical contact.
- When communion is celebrated, additional precautions will be necessary. The Pastor will conduct the service; however, you will not receive the elements until end of service when you will receive a pre-filled cup with wafer and juice to open and partake in your private vehicle.
- If you need assistance or to use the bathroom, signal an Usher and follow his or her directions.

REMEMBER that we are all part of the body of Christ and that we have a duty to protect ourselves, our families, and our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are using our best available science to come back together. We still do not know enough about this virus to be completely sure of all these safety precautions; so we will continue what we have been doing during our "sheltered in place" time - sending Self-Guided Worship material out and using our Facebook and YouTube presence to proclaim the Good News of God's love! Keep our church and each other in your prayers.

If you have any questions or concerns, give me a call at 757-787-3150 or email me at jimcanody@vaumc.org. It is with joy and thanksgiving that we look forward to worshipping together in person! Blessings!

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