



CSUMC Operation Plan for COVID-19

**This plan was approved by TN Valley District Superintendent
Ann Robins on September 17, 2020.**

There are five core principles of necessary behaviors to prevent transmission of COVID-19, especially in the group setting:

1. Social distancing
2. Facial covering
3. Hand hygiene
4. Disinfection of contact surfaces
5. Self-exclusion for illness or risk of illness

The following plan intends to tailor these principles to CSUMC.

Measures are subject to change according to functionality and updated guidelines from Holston Conference and governmental agencies. The plan is divided into three phases. Each phase is expected to last 28 days or longer and may move forward or backward depending on concurrent circumstances.

PHASE ONE

Phase One, commenced May 1, 2020, with the start of re-opening of businesses and community-and-faith based organizations (CFBOs). Under the mandate of Bishop Taylor, CSUMC ceased all activities and closed the buildings to all non-staff individuals while Conference leaders developed future plans and while a task force of Parish Health Team, SASH, and staff at CSUMC prepared operational guidelines for possible resumption of these activities. The task force read many resources and listened to a variety of webinars presented by thoughtful



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church leaders and public health experts who shared their perspectives and recommendations on re-opening churches.

Soup Kitchen is one of two functions currently active on campus. It has been modified from cafeteria-style service to “grab and go” service, taking place for guests outside of the church buildings. The CSUMC Preschool (which is full-time daycare) reopened in April for children of essential employees and then in July for children of all employees after receiving permission from the District Superintendent. Electronic broadcasts of worship service, Sunday school meetings, and special presentations are expected to continue for the foreseeable future. A congregational survey was sent to church members to gauge their comfort level in how we safely move forward in reopening the church. Those results were compiled and shared with the Church Council at their meeting on July 28, 2020.

PHASE TWO

In-Person worship at CSUMC may commence when Knox County reports 14 days of decline in new COVID-19 cases and when the Bishop has endorsed resumption of in-person worship.

There will be considerable modification from pre-COVID-19 traditional worship.

- As opposed to social contact, measures will be invoked to promote social distance.
- Avoid physical contact including handshake, fist or elbow bump, hugging or kissing. Instead, use a nod, hand wave or signal.

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- To accommodate six feet of spacing between households during worship service, there will be two empty rows between each seated row.
- Given the requirement to limit attendance to no more than fifty percent (50%) of seating capacity, a reservation system will be initiated to efficiently seat households under the direction of our trained ushers and new volunteers.
- At this time neither a third worship service nor a separate viewing room for overflow congregants is anticipated.
- Virtual worship will continue for those not comfortable with or who have reason to not attend worship in person.
- Access to and egress from the nave will be via Welcome Center, Henley Street, and Hill Avenue entrances.
- The chapel and balconies will be closed and access to other parts of the building will be prohibited.
- Dismissal will be one row of pews at a time as directed by the ushers in order to maintain spaced, unidirectional exit from the nave.
- Designated concierges will be positioned at restrooms and elevators to minimize person-to-person contact and to sanitize bathroom surfaces between use.
- Golf carts used to assist individuals from parking lots to church buildings will be modified with plexiglass and disinfectants.
- All congregants will wear cloth or paper masks covering nose and mouth to prevent potential respiratory droplet transmission of infection. Those who arrive without a mask will be provided a suitable mask by volunteers. Efforts are underway to develop a

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supply of reusable cloth masks which can be laundered after each use – those individuals taking a mask will be asked to take it home, launder and re-use it at their next visit. Children under age two will not be expected to wear masks. Clergy will also wear masks except when speaking at an appropriate distance from the congregation.

- Hand sanitizing stations will be available at nave entryways.
- Those who are at higher risk, who have symptoms of illness, or who are experiencing sneezing or coughing due to allergies are requested to worship at home.
- If a congregant becomes ill while attending a worship service and does not have a safe way home, they will be escorted to the prayer room until a member of their immediate social cohort can tend to their loved one.

Major changes in worship service include:

1. Depository stations for gifts and offerings will replace the passing of the offering plate.
2. Prepackaged communion elements will be provided to each household at their pew for self-administration of the elements.
3. Bibles, hymnals, and attendance registration pads will not be available.
4. A single page worship bulletin will be placed at assigned seats.
5. Singing of hymns by the congregation is suspended.
6. Children will no longer gather at altar steps for children's worship and will stay in the nave for the duration of the worship service, as a nursery will not be immediately available.



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7. Modification of baptism and of new member ceremonies will be necessary.
8. Choir activities will be curtailed.

Enhanced sanitization of high touch surfaces (pews, door handles, stair railings, bathrooms, and elevators) using approved disinfectants will be performed between services by trained custodial staff who will wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Worshipers will exit the nave as soon as possible at service's end and are asked not to enter the nave until directed to do so just before the start of service to allow sufficient time for necessary preparation. It would be advisable to wait in the car or outside of church entrances until summoned to enter. Pew cushions will be removed from the pews since their porous nature makes their disinfection more difficult. It is understood that circumstances could require discontinuation of corporate worship going forward.

Church Street may opt to first welcome small groups, such as Sunday School classes, UMW circles, and committees, to meet in Parish Hall, before live worship commences in the nave. Appropriate social distancing, masking, observation of additional health and safety rules, and disinfecting surfaces between group meetings will be enacted.

PHASE THREE

It is anticipated that social distancing measures may be necessary indefinitely or at least until there is no longer felt to be an ongoing risk of recurrent or new pandemics. Issues that will need to be addressed going forward include future of congregational meetings, format of major church holiday services, role of the choir, feasibility of resuming adult, children's and youth activities, ability to offer nursery care, use of



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the nave for funerals and weddings, and feasibility of live streaming of worship services.



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ADDENDUM

OUTDOOR WORSHIP AND SMALL GROUPS

The five core principles of necessary behaviors to prevent transmission of COVID-19 apply to outdoor worship and small group activities as well:

1. Social distancing
2. Facial covering
3. Hand hygiene
4. Disinfection of contact surfaces
5. Self-exclusion for illness or risk of illness

Outdoor worship will be allowed only after approval from the Resident Bishop of the Holston Conference and the Tennessee Valley District Superintendent. Online/Virtual worship will continue.

The following guidelines will be followed:

- Participants must provide their own seating and sit with members of their household, six feet apart from other households. Parents will be required to supervise their children to make sure they do not wander to another household. Areas for households will be marked to assist groups in social distancing.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be available at the entrance to the area. There will be one entrance and one exit.
- Offering collection boxes will be used to avoid the passing of a collection plate.

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- Masks will be required at all times for everyone except children under the age of 2.
- Restroom facilities will be available for use, with cleaning and sanitizing between use.
- There will be no congregational singing, but special music by soloists may be provided if there is acceptable distance between the soloist and congregation.
- No hymnals or Bibles will be provided.
- Prepackaged communion elements will be provided as participants arrive for self-administration of the elements.

Small groups of less than 20 members may meet in an outdoor setting. Again, all of the 5 protocols must be followed, specifically:

- Participants must sit at least 6 feet apart.
- Participants should provide their own seating.
- Masks must be worn at all times.
- Hand sanitizer must be available.
- No sharing of food or common food tables are allowed.
- No passing of any type of materials.
- No physical contact.
- No group singing will be allowed.
- Restroom facilities will be available for use, with cleaning and sanitizing between use.



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Attendance **must** be recorded at each worship service or small group gathering. The attendance should be sent to the Church Administrator who will maintain a file of all attendance.

REFERENCES

CDC: Interim Guidance for Administrators and Leaders of CFBOs to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to COVID-19

CDC: Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public Spaces, Workplace, Businesses, Schools, and Homes

CDC: Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting

CDC: Checklist for Community and Faith Leaders

CDC: FAQs for Administrators and Leaders at CFBOs

State of Tennessee: Governor's Executive Orders for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Knox County Health Department: A Strategy for Phased Reopening for Knox County and City of Knoxville, Phase One

Knox County Health Department: Webinar for CBFOs

This plan was approved by the Church Street Church Council on September 10, 2020.