Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**RETURNING TO CHURCH**

**1. Should I go to church if I have been in contact with someone that has COVID19?**

**NO**- please stay at home and you should contact your primary care physician and inform him or her. You should self-quarantine for 14 days.

**2. Has my church made it’s full reopening plan available?**

**YES**- it is available at the church’s website at [www.westviewheightsumc.com](http://www.westviewheightsumc.com) and/or a copy can be mailed to you. If you need a copy please notify the church office. There is also a summary of the main document available.

**3. Is my church keeping attendance records and will I be notified if someone in church is diagnosed with COVID19?**

**YES**-we will record who is in attendance each day that we have in-person worship services. If needed we can check these records quickly and notify people as necessary. As soon as we are notified of a confirmed case we can begin notification of those who were in attendance within 30 minutes of receiving the initial notification of a confirmed case.

**4. Is my church reopening according to current state and local orders and recommendations?**

**YES**- along with recommendations from the Alabama-West Florida Bishop, we will follow the recommendations of the Alabama Dept. of Public Health, the CDC and Alabama Governor Kay Ivey.

**5. Will masks, tissues, hand sanitizer, and no contact trash cans be available for use?**

**YES**-masks will be available for your use. Trash cans will be available for disposing of the masks when the service is completed. Hand sanitizer will be available and no contact trash cans will be positioned throughout the sanctuary. Please use the trash containers.

**6. Has my church made alternate worship options available for the elderly and the disabled?**

**YES**-we encouraged the elderly and those at high risk to stay at home and worship online via our Facebook page which is at: [www.facebook.com/westviewheightsunitedmethodistchurch/](http://www.facebook.com/westviewheightsunitedmethodistchurch/)

**7. If I currently have a fever, a cough and shortness of breath, should I go to church?**

**NO**- Please stay at home and contact your primary care doctor. These are the major presenting symptoms of COVID19 (aka SARS-CoV-2)

**8. Is my church encouraging social distancing and a no contact policy?**

**YES**- we encourage all people to adhere to and follow the social distancing requirements issued by the governor. The task force has agreed to have a No Contact policy. These guidelines and requirements are for the safety and health of all persons. We ask all persons to adhere to these guidelines for the safety of all present.

**9. Has the sanctuary been disinfected and cleaned and how frequently will it be cleaned during use?**

**YES**-all surfaces have been cleaned and sanitized and will be cleaned and sanitized on a weekly basis. “Extra” hymnals and bibles have been removed. Pencils and forms have been removed; every other row of pews has been marked off for social distancing. The pew backs, sides, tops and ends have been wiped down. The sanctuary also has no human contact for at least five continuous days each week. Periodically, the side and front doors are propped open for natural air ventilation to occur.

**10. Has my church explained the new operating process for arrivals, seating, worship practices, exiting, and dealing with apparent illness?**

**YES**- this has been explained via postings and videos on Facebook, the church website, emails, and letters to members. An indepth explanation is on our website at: [www.westviewheightsumc.com](http://www.westviewheightsumc.com)

**11. Are social distancing measures clearly marked, explained and enforced?**

**YES**- Multiple signs are posted throughout the building to remind people to practice social distancing and No Contact. We take the safety of our staff and members in earnest. This is a deadly and contagious virus. If the guidelines are not adequately followed and adhered to we may need to return to online worship only.

**12. Will children’s church or a nursery be provided at this time?**

**NO**- our Re-entry task force has determined that at this time we will suspend these programs in the church. Children are not immune to the Covid19 virus. Children also will struggle to maintain a 6 foot perimeter of social distancing around them without 2 adults present.

**13. Who do I contact if I become ill after attending a worship service?**

Please contact Rev. Dr. Jabe Fincher at the following numbers:

**Church office: (334) 774-8547; Cell phone-(251) 404-8467;**

**email:** [**jabe.fincher@gmail.com**](mailto:jabe.fincher@gmail.com)

**14. Will I be contacted in case of possible COVID19 exposure at church?**

**YES**- As we receive information of a person’s confirmed case of COVID19 we will begin notifying others. We will contact all persons who may have been exposed to the COVID19 virus. We will use telephones, email, and texting to notify.

**15. What about HVAC systems (air conditioning and heat)?**

For those with Central Air, experts now agree there is minimal risk that running your HVAC will increase exposure to the virus. Though, it is still recommended to close off spaces not in use during this season of cautious reentry. Experts encourage you to run your central air throughout the week as it helps keep humidity down; humidity keeps the virus airborne longer than the normal 3 hours. They further recommend high-efficiency filters that are created for allergens as they can remove particles of an equivalent size.

**16. What about music ministry?**

If there is 12 feet between the organist/musician (socially distanced from one another) and the front row of the appropriately distanced congregation - live music can happen. However, worshipers are encouraged to not sing and to remain masked. (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e6.htm>)

All worship team members (including the pastor) are encouraged to wear masks when not singing or speaking. You may consider non-wind instruments during this season.

17. **If our space is only used once a week, why is it important to disinfect everything?** -- If you can be 100% people-free for a period of 5 days, you should be good-to-go if the HVAC is building wide. If you have more than one HVAC system - avoid the spaces of the one shared with the sanctuary for a period of 5 days.

**18. How do we serve communion and keep everyone safe?**

During outdoor worship, you may provide single-serving communion kits (purchased or handmade by health-vetted volunteers) or invite your folks to bring their own elements from home and lead the communion service outdoors. For those returning to indoor services; when serving communion, please use disposable single-serving kits, as well. Be mindful of where people are taking their masks off and on, and provide adequate hand-sanitizing options for before and after. Ask your congregants to dispose of the containers in a marked receptacle on their way out following the worship service.

19. **What are the recommendations for receptions (graduations, weddings, funerals etc.) held at the church?**

Receptions and other gatherings in the church building are not recommended at this time. We will address the issue of funerals as they arise.

20. **Is singing by a soloist recommended?** --- The guideline has been one single vocalist with 12-15 feet between the vocalist and the “front pew” - this is the same directive for the preacher and liturgist, as well. All worship team folks are encouraged to remain masked when they are not speaking or singing. Those leading worship are asked to take their temperature before worship, to refrain from participation if they have been exposed to Covid19 and to explore other creative ways to lead worship.

21. **What are the protocols for bulletins if a church doesn’t have projection capabilities?--** It would be best to print the bulletins several days before the service and allow the bulletins to sit out so the possible virus can degrade. Have gloved personnel hand bulletins out and have a trash container for congregants to easily dispose of them after worship. You may also send out an email copy that folks could pull up on their phones. Now might also be a great time to explore a screen and projection capabilities for your church.

22. **What is our church doing to help protect itself from possible lawsuits**?

We have implemented these aforementioned safety policies and guidelines according to the Alabama Dept. of Public Health, CDC, and Governor Kay Ivey. We are asking all congregants to sign a waiver. We are taking the recommended precautions to address and minimize the spread of this COVID19 virus. We have limited access to the church office and we regularly sanitize in the church office area.

23. **When we have “Parking-Lot or Drive-In” Church why do we need to park six feet apart?** – This is to minimize the possible spread of the COVID19 virus. If you have your window down and the other driver has his/her window down and you are parked next to one another you may still have respiratory droplets travel that distance. This also acts as a reminder to practice social distancing when we are not in our vehicles.

24. **Will the bathrooms be “open” for parking lot/drive in church?-**Officially, the answer is “NO.” Unofficially,if you need to go we will not deny you from going but we urge you to limit the use of bathrooms as much as possible to reduce the potential of spreading or contracting COVID19.

25. **Can I invite others to join us in the parking lot church?**

Yes-please do, we will be glad to let them know how and where to park and other basics of the service. We will gladly spread God’s Word to them or any other person during this unusual time.