

Westview Heights United Methodist church
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www.westviewheightsumc.com

PLEASE READ THIS COMPLETE DOCUMENT CAREFULLY



COVID-19 CHURCH RE-ENTRY TASK FORCE

MAY 2020

Developed for Westview Heights United Methodist Church

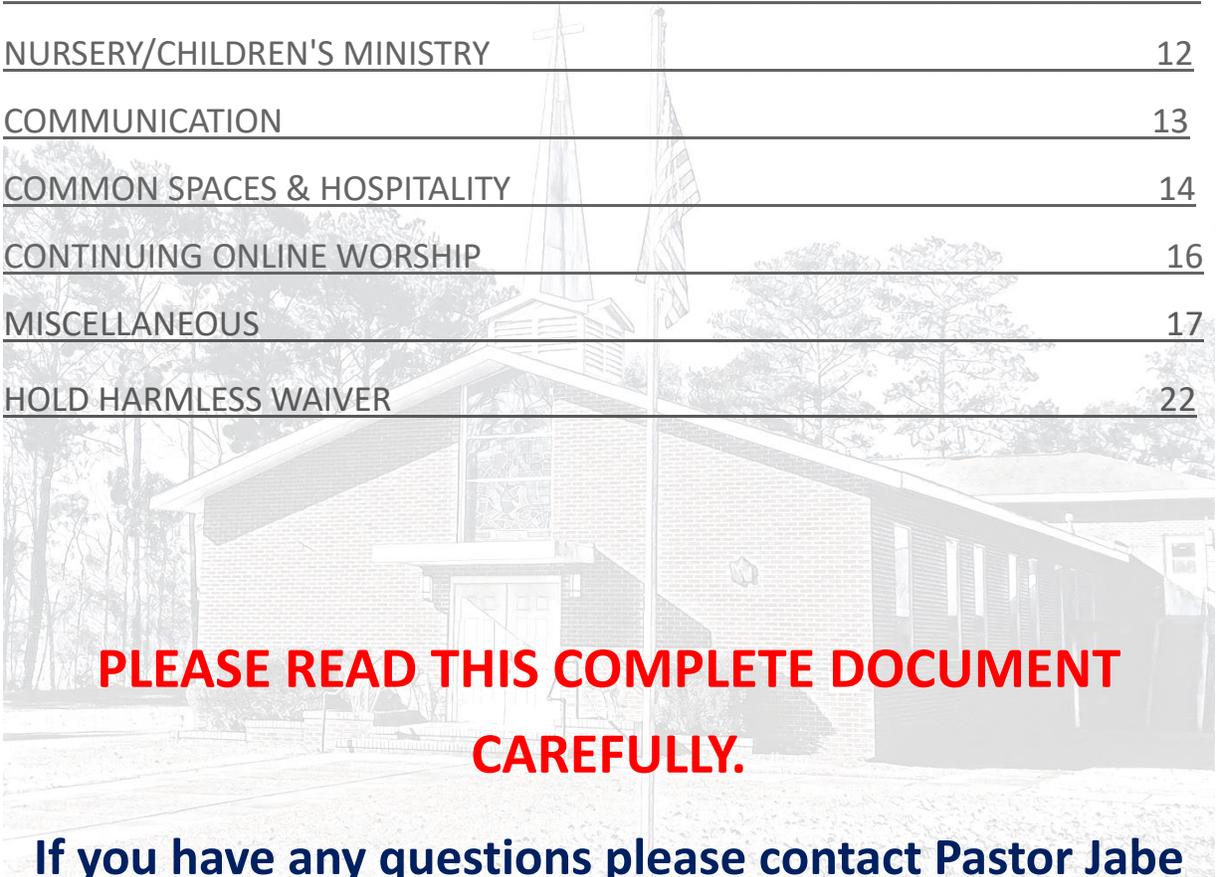


updated/revised 5/15/2020; 5/25/2020; 5/26/2020

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CAREFULLY.**

**If you have any questions please contact Pastor Jabe
Fincher at jabe.fincher@gmail.com**

Or (251) 404-8467

RE-ENTRY PLAN

INTRODUCTION

A TASK FORCE WAS ASSEMBLED TO ADDRESS THE RE-ENTRY INTO THE CHURCH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. THE TASK FORCE WAS TO DEVELOP METHODS, PRECAUTIONS AND WAYS OF COMMUNICATION FOR THE BEST METHOD TO RE-OPEN CHURCH TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THE HEALTH ASPECTS AND SAFETY ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH THE VIRUS.

TEAMS MEMBERS INCLUDE:

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jabe J. Fincher, Jr.
Andy Kogutz, Trustees Member
Sylvia Gottschall, Finance Committee member
Joey Parish-Lay Leader
Carol Chancey- Council Chair and Lay Delegate
Roy Dunn, Finance Chair
Larry Mixon, Pastor/Parish Relations Chair

STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

We will adhere to ALL federal, state, denominational, and local recommendations concerning social distancing, wearing PPE, sanitizing, etc.

TIMELINE

We will re-examine this document every **(2) two** weeks to decide whether to reduce or increase the effectiveness of this document taking into consideration recommendations from the president, state governor, AWF bishop and other leaders.

There will be certain trigger points and thresholds that will implement the next phase or regress into the previous phase, as needed.

We will follow a 3 phase re-entry to in-person worship services. You may check these items off as we proceed so you can see what progress is being made.

RE-ENTRY PLAN

Phase 1- Move to next phase when all components of phase 1 are completed.

_____ Develop and finalize a plan for re-entry to in-person worship and parking lot services. Finalize communication messages and methods to those who may attend and ensure all have received these communications. Complete the plan and ready for distribution.

_____ Communicate the expectations, reasoning, and precautions taken to all persons who may attend church. **(please read and review the miscellaneous section)**

_____ Ready the sanctuary for re-entry to include disinfecting and sanitizing all accessible surfaces. Measures for proper social distancing, etc.

_____ Post signage throughout church concerning precautions, information, etc.

_____ Develop a 1 to 4 page summary of measures/procedures to distribute to all regular and frequent attendees to this church.

_____ Continue to monitor recommendations/mandates by the Bishop, Governor Ivey, and State Health Dept.

_____ Continue online services

_____ Plan for parking lot worship services (all contingencies—raining, bad weather; prior to each service ensure ALL equipment is working properly.—How can we record this for online use? _____

Phase 2-

_____ Begin parking lot services.

_____ Examine this document to see if any measures can be lessened or eliminated.

_____ Monitor compliance with existing policy and procedures.

_____ Continue with online worship services.

RE-ENTRY PLAN

_____ Monitor Local, State, CDC, WHO, denominational and White House guidelines and recommendations.

_____ Possibly go to worship in sanctuary every other week.

_____ **Trigger point:** if coronavirus cases in the state begin a quick escalation we will revert to phase 1.

Phase 3-

_____ Return to in-person worship in the sanctuary when there is a definite 10 day decline in COVID cases in Alabama.

_____ Continue all safety precautions and mandates as issue by local, state, denominational and federal governments.

_____ Continue to communicate need for precautions and safety measures

_____ Monitor congregation for potential cases of COVID-19.

_____ Maintain a 50% capacity limit in sanctuary.

_____ **Trigger point:** If coronavirus cases in the state begin a quick escalation we will revert to phase 2 and re-evaluate.

OPERATING HIGHLIGHTS

Social distancing is defined as staying at least 6 feet apart from other person; no hugging/shaking hands, no contact with common objects (such as offering plates, etc.) We will maintain social distancing on the church campus. If the recommendations within this document are not adequately followed we may have to resort to online worship again.

RE-ENTRY PLAN

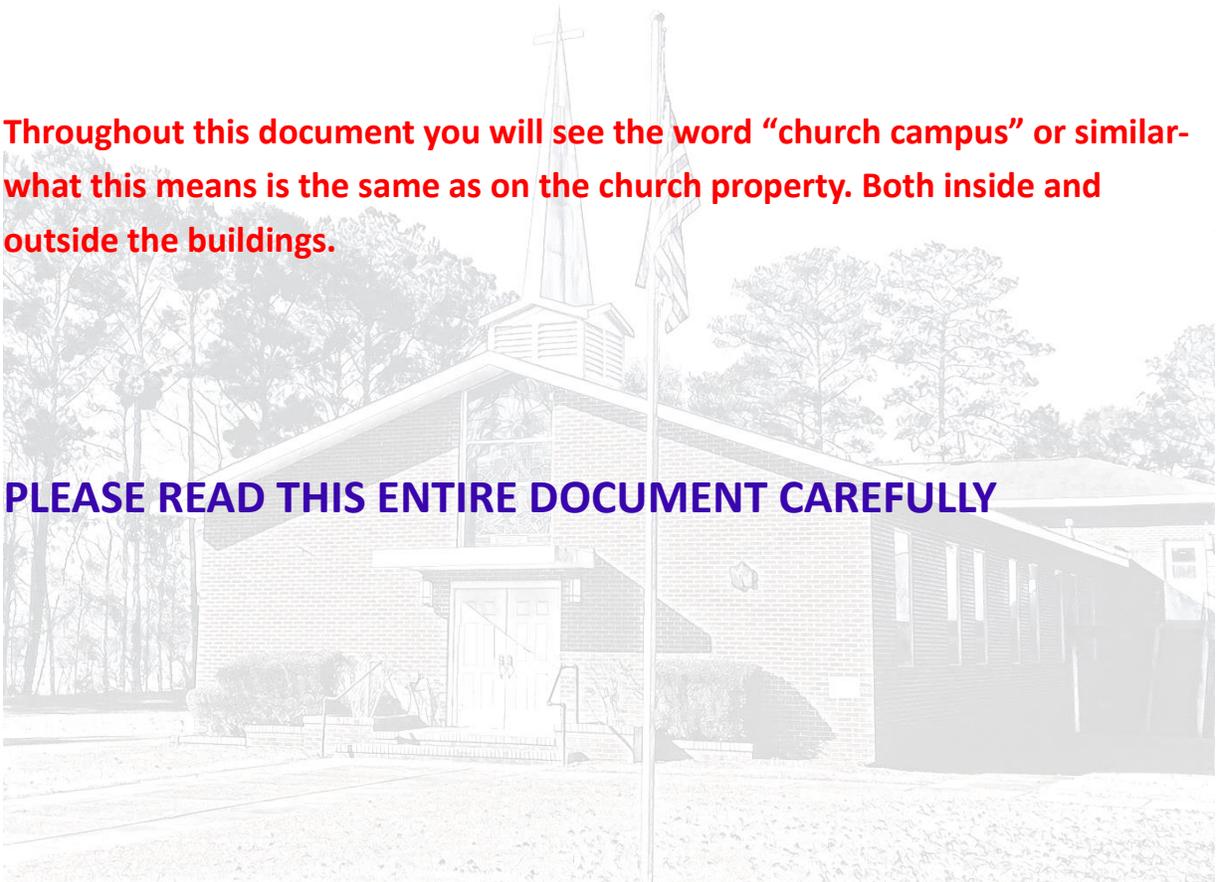
LOOKING AHEAD

WE CARE ABOUT THOSE WHO ATTEND THIS CHURCH AND THESE MEASURES AND PRECAUTIONS ARE FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL WHO WORSHIP HERE.

WE WILL CONTINUALLY MONITOR CONDITIONS AS NECESSARY.

Throughout this document you will see the word “church campus” or similar- what this means is the same as on the church property. Both inside and outside the buildings.

PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRE DOCUMENT CAREFULLY



RE-ENTRY PLAN

From the pastor:

As your pastor and since I fall into the at risk category I am hesitant about re-opening church merely to reopen. I realize everyone is anxious to return to church and be in fellowship again. At this time I feel it is prudent to maintain a view of good health and safety over any desire to simply return to church. COVID-19 is a dangerous disease and someone can be carrying the virus and spread it before they even know they have or had the virus. **It is my strong belief that to err on the side of safety is our best course of action.** The sanctuary is only a building where we gather to worship; we are the church.

I am in belief that some will not return to church right away until a vaccine has been developed; others may not return at all. I believe we need to examine the whole situation carefully, thoughtfully, and prayerfully. Hoping things will get better is not a good strategy. I think we need to make some decisive determinations and not merely hope or expect things will get better.

Personally, I would like to see at least **10 continuous days** of decline in new cases in Alabama before we consider re-opening. Optimally, I would like to have a vaccine easily available, but from what I'm hearing that is about a year off.

I am just as ready as you are to return to church, yet I also believe it is our job as leaders in this church to demonstrate and practice restraint and concern for the health and safety of those who attend Westview Heights UMC to worship.

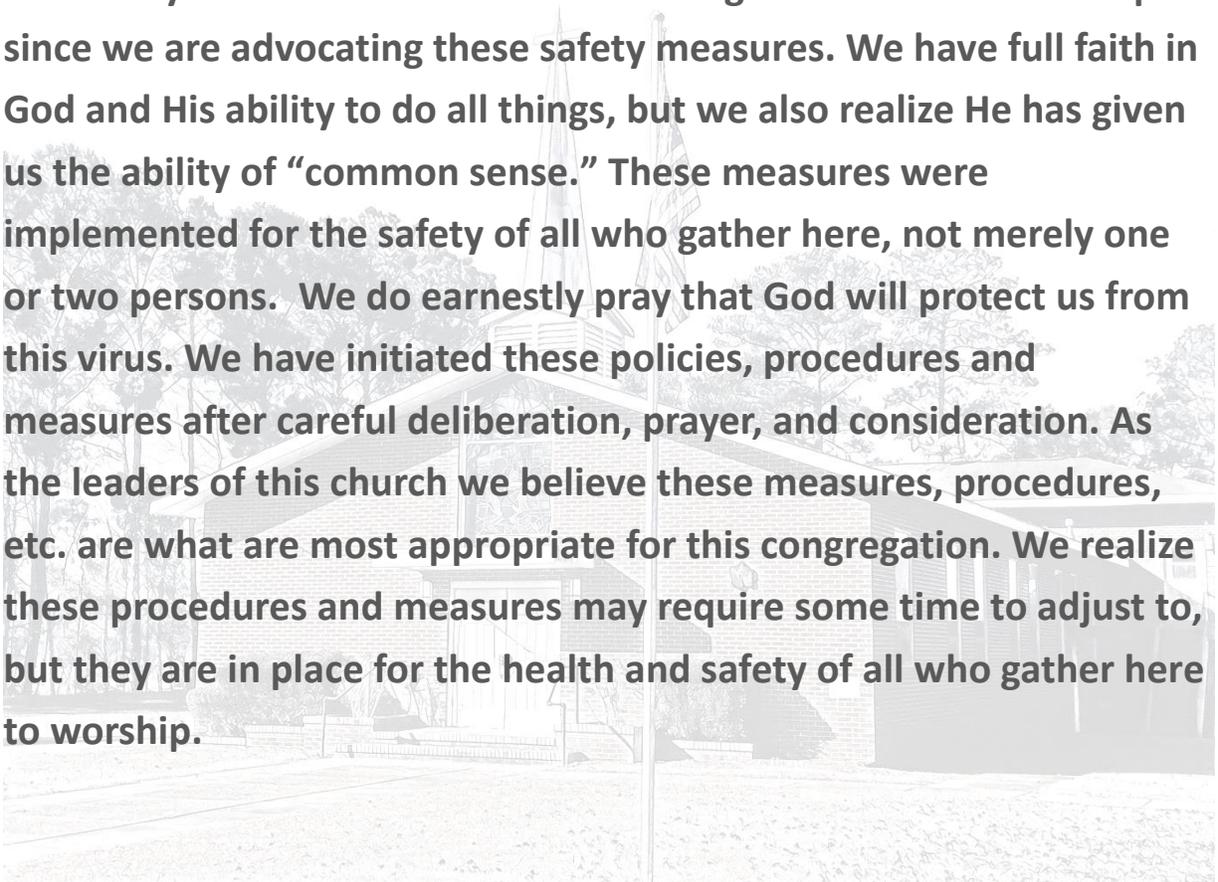
Finally, things will not be as they were. We will have a "new" normal whatever that may entail. Welcome to the COVID-19 world!

Rev. Dr. Jabe J. Fincher, Jr.

RE-ENTRY PLAN

From The COVID19 Church Re-Entry Task Force:

We, the COVID19 Reentry Task Force realize these measures may not be optimal for everyone here. We apologize for that. We also realize that many are concerned about a seeming “lack of faith” on our part since we are advocating these safety measures. We have full faith in God and His ability to do all things, but we also realize He has given us the ability of “common sense.” These measures were implemented for the safety of all who gather here, not merely one or two persons. We do earnestly pray that God will protect us from this virus. We have initiated these policies, procedures and measures after careful deliberation, prayer, and consideration. As the leaders of this church we believe these measures, procedures, etc. are what are most appropriate for this congregation. We realize these procedures and measures may require some time to adjust to, but they are in place for the health and safety of all who gather here to worship.



RE-ENTRY PLAN

WORSHIP SERVICES

The sanctuary is the area where most people will gather at one time therefore it will be where the main emphasis is on sanitizing, disinfecting, social distancing, and no contact.

INSIDE THE SANCTUARY

- Certain rows of pews have been blocked off. Please do not sit in these rows. This is to ensure proper social distancing.
- **THERE WILL BE A NO CONTACT** policy and proper social distancing is to be followed at **ALL** times while on the church campus.
- The laity (church members) are urged to wear masks while in the sanctuary. We will have masks if you do not have any.
- Please do not roam to speak with other people. Please do not gather/congregate in groups of 2 or more persons inside the building. Please refrain from doing this inside the building. If you wish to speak with someone please meet them outside to have your conversation. Please maintain proper social distancing while on church campus.
- Please touch only what you absolutely need to touch.
- **We will maintain proper social distancing at all times.** Please follow the directions of the ushers when in the sanctuary.
- At times we may prop the doors open to allow for better ventilation.
- Please do not share hymnals or pass hymnals around. Use one and the same hymnal for the whole service.
- We will keep accurate attendance records for all present. In the case someone has a confirmed case of SARS-CoV-2 we will notify everyone in attendance within the previous 14 days and will conduct an more in depth cleaning of the sanctuary and facilities.
- We will exit in an orderly manner to maximize social distancing. Please wait and follow the directions of the ushers.
- Singing will be kept to a minimum since singing can spread more respiratory droplets; as can speaking.
-

RE-ENTRY PLAN

PARKING LOT SERVICES

This is concerned with worship services called “parking lot services” but this is also recommended for any time.

Please refer to diagram on page 10 about parking.

Cars are to be positioned so there is an empty parking space between cars. Please do not get out of your vehicle.

An usher type person will circulate through the parked cars to gather tithes and offerings. He/she will have a container on a long pole in consideration of social distancing.

Maintain proper social distancing.

Passing of items from vehicles to vehicle is prohibited.

Please remain in your car at all times.

No carpooling!- Only individuals from a single household should be in the vehicle.

Please, come as you are, but stay in your car!

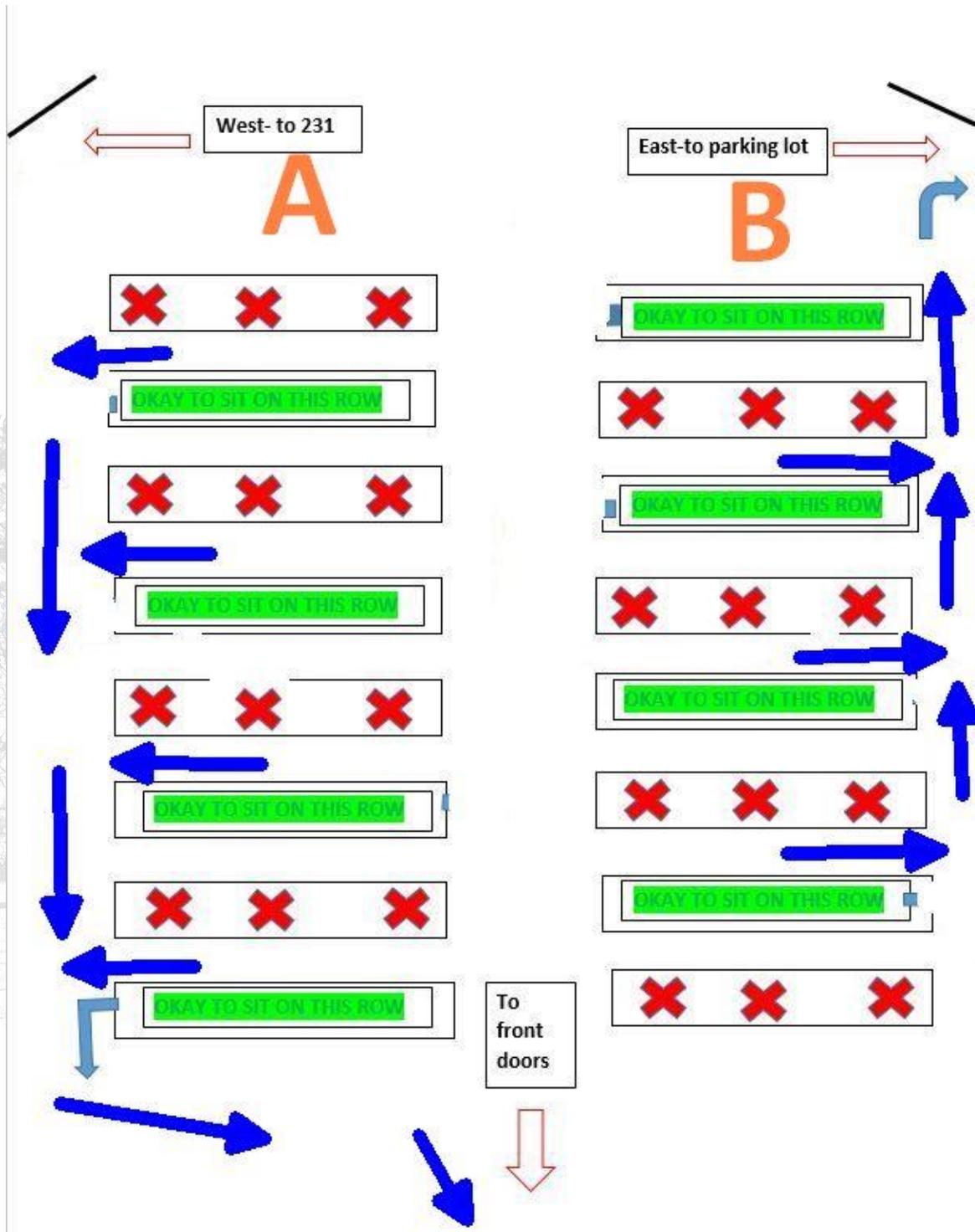
EXITING THE BUILDING

Please see the diagram on [page 9](#)

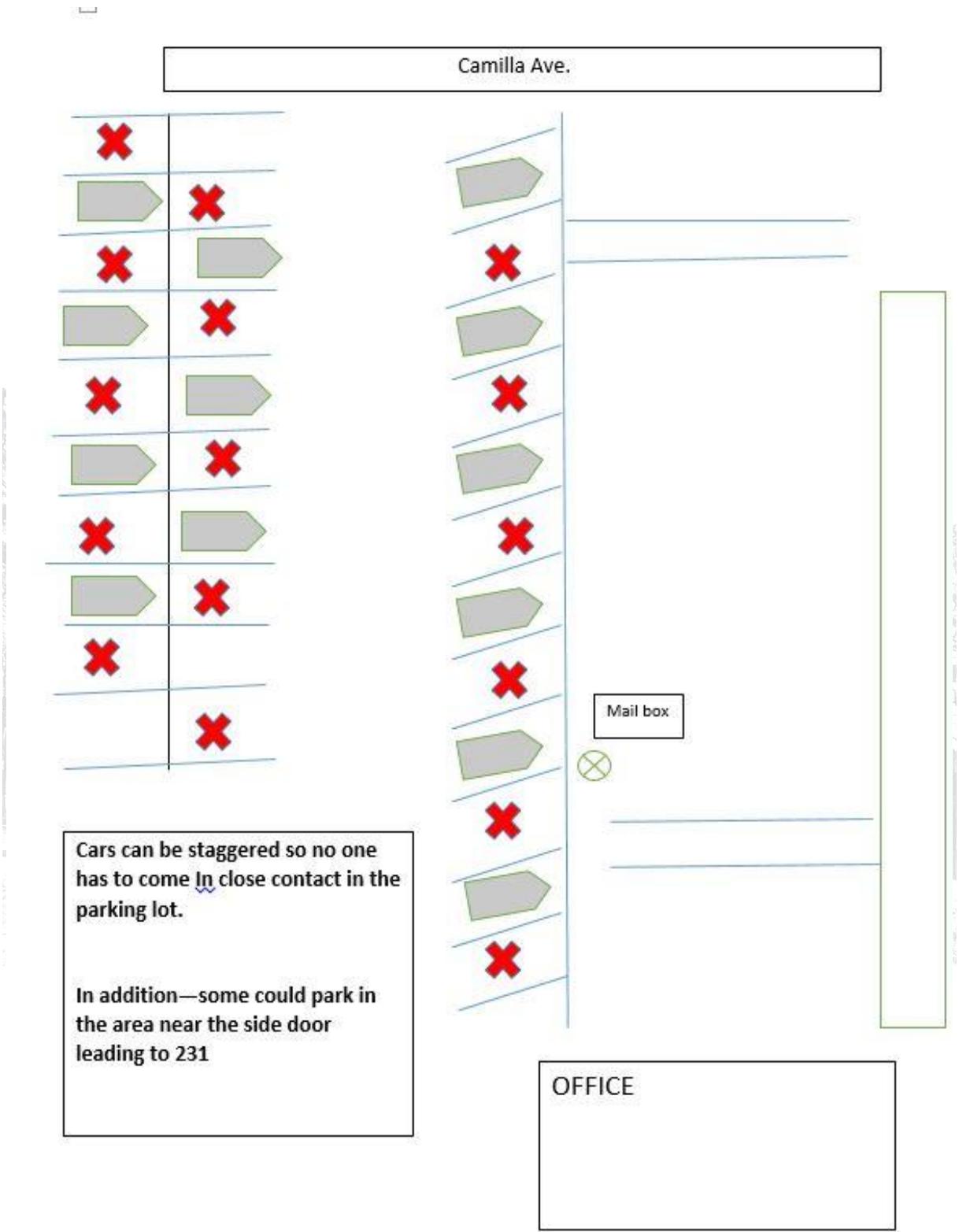
If you sit on the west side of the sanctuary (nearest to Hwy. 231) side A in the diagram, please exit the building by the front (main) door. Please follow the directions of the usher and do not leave until directed. Please do not use the center aisle. Please exit the pews toward the outer wall.

If you sit on the east side (the side nearest to the parking lot) B in the diagram--please follow the directions of the usher and exit by the side door. Please do not use the center aisle. Please exit the pew toward the outer wall.

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FINANCIAL & PLAN “B” STRATEGY

Some Ideas:

1. Calculate what expenses have already been reduced during the time the church was closed. Offerings were down but so were so expenses. Someone needs to calculate these details. Consider this as you look to readjusting your budget.
2. What future events will not take place? Are there budgeted events we will not hold? Drop them from our spending plan.
3. It may sound strange, but there is a saying: “Never waste a good disaster.” This economic difficulty may give our church the energy to make some budget changes which really needed to be made anyway. Ineffective programs can be discontinued. Programs which once were valuable but no longer hit the mark can be closed down.
4. Draw a “worst case” budget scenario: if our receipts for 2020 are 50% of what they were in 2019, what will we do? Better to plan now than react in late October when the funds are no longer there.
5. THINK VERY CAREFULLY about how you communicate the church’s financial needs. Persons who are out of work or who live off a declining stock portfolio may react poorly to the normal appeals for giving that churches do when income is down.
6. If we have not had an online giving option before, do we need one now? Some are not difficult to set up. The easier we make giving, the better for donors.
7. As previously stated, hoping things get better is not a good strategy. We should plan for contingencies in case things do not get better, and we need to plan now, not in October or November when we are out of money. We should be proactive in this case and not reactive.

From what I am hearing many health care professionals expect there to be a resurgence of COVID19 in the fall or winter.

As a side note: Many, if not most, of the precautions listed here will also work in the event of a flu epidemic.

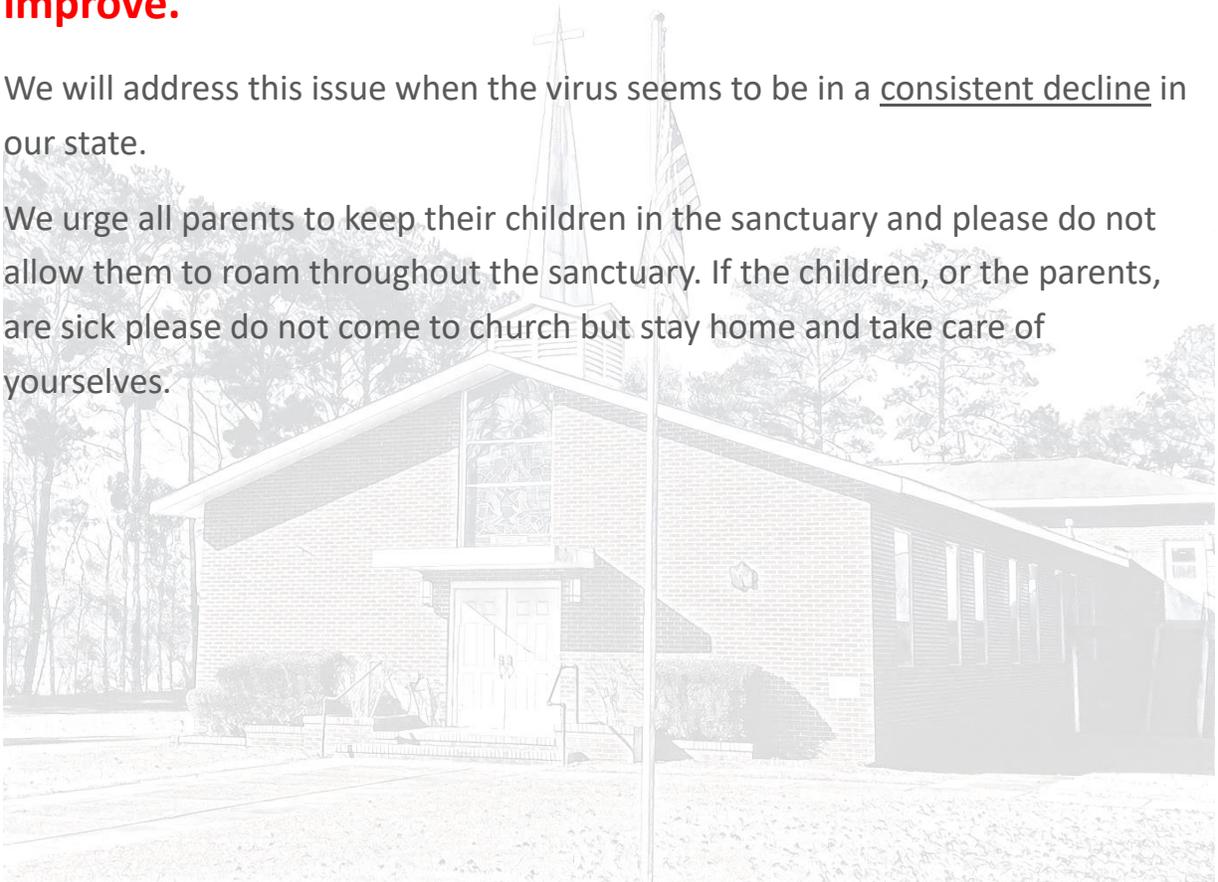
RE-ENTRY PLAN

NURSERY & CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

At this point we WILL NOT have a nursery or children's church. This will be addressed in the future as conditions improve.

We will address this issue when the virus seems to be in a consistent decline in our state.

We urge all parents to keep their children in the sanctuary and please do not allow them to roam throughout the sanctuary. If the children, or the parents, are sick please do not come to church but stay home and take care of yourselves.



PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRE DOCUMENT CAREFULLY.

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COMMUNICATION

Major forms of communication will be: word-of-mouth; email, texts, Facebook, Church website, letters, and telephone calls.

Various signs and reminders have been posted throughout the buildings.

We will continue to over-communicate these measures and precautions to ensure as many persons as possible have received the proper information.

Please check your email and Facebook often as that is where the majority of communications will occur. For those that do not have access to or do not use computers, letters will be mailed usually on a weekly basis.

The following letters will also be copied to emails and adjusted appropriately.

Letter 1—basic overview, questions before returning to church, practice social distancing, parking lot services.

Letter 2—health and welfare first; guidelines, small groups, social distancing at all times, no nursery/children's' church, collection boxes, questions before coming to church.

Letter 3—may be overkill but err on side of safety; recommend elderly stay home; social distancing, no groups meeting, registering attendance, minimal singing, if disregard may re-close church, continue monitoring.

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COMMON SPACES & HOSPITALITY

Please refrain from shaking hands, or hugging. There is a no contact policy we are following. Greet one another by waving or merely speaking. **There is to be NO CONTACT, please!**

Some rows of pews are marked. Please **DO NOT** use these rows. If you have a large family please sit only in rows that are open (every other row).

Please clean up after yourself when you go into the bathrooms at the church. There should be Lysol spray in each bathroom. Please use it. Please wash your hands well before exiting the bathroom.

If there is a confirmed case of SARS CoV-2 in a congregation member we will need to examine and notify all persons within the previous 14 days (if in attendance) and conduct a more in depth cleaning in the facilities.

Please be mindful of social distancing at all times while on the church campus.



RE-ENTRY PLAN

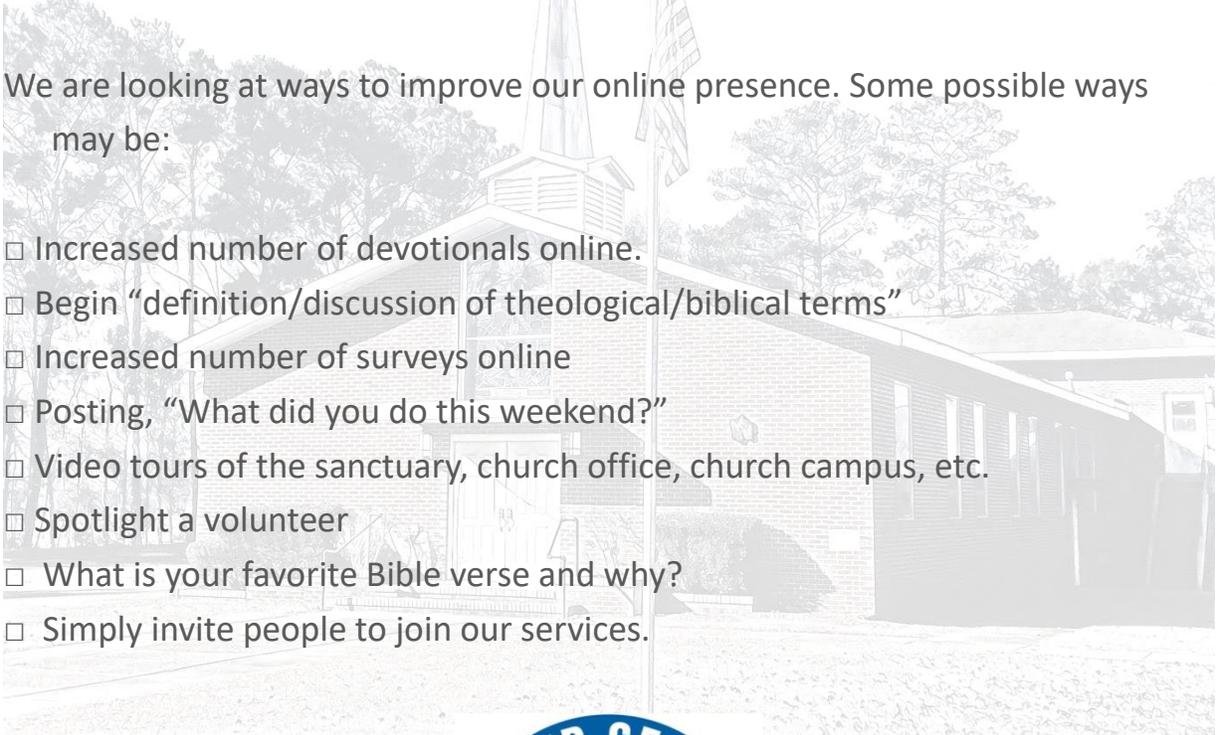
CONTINUING ONLINE WORSHIP

We will continue online worship and we are looking at ways to improve our online worship experience.

We realize that many people may be hesitant to return to church at this time, and that is perfectly okay. We will continue to publish the sermons and other forms of communication on Facebook and the church's website.

We are looking at ways to improve our online presence. Some possible ways may be:

- Increased number of devotionals online.
- Begin "definition/discussion of theological/biblical terms"
- Increased number of surveys online
- Posting, "What did you do this weekend?"
- Video tours of the sanctuary, church office, church campus, etc.
- Spotlight a volunteer
- What is your favorite Bible verse and why?
- Simply invite people to join our services.



MISCELLANEOUS

COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)

The coronavirus is a protein it is not a living organism, therefore germicides and antibiotics do not kill it. If it's not alive you cannot kill it. It is fairly weak virus in the aspect that it is easy to cause it to become unstable or decay. It has an outer lipid (fat) covering that is broken down in heat (water over 77°F); UV rays, soap suds, Hydrogen peroxide, bleach, 65% alcohol, and other similar products. The main form of transmission is via small respiratory droplets.

- Since the virus is not a living organism but a protein molecule, it is not killed, but decays on its own. The disintegration time depends on the temperature, humidity and type of material where it resides.
 - The virus is very fragile; the only thing that protects it is a thin outer layer of fat. **That is why any soap or detergent is the best remedy, because the foam cuts through the fat.** This is why you rubbing for 20 seconds or more and producing foam helps break down the virus.
 - Heat melts the fatty protective layer. This this is why **it is good to use water above 77 degrees Fahrenheit** when washing hands, clothes and other things that can have contact with your skin. In addition, hot water makes more foam, which makes washing of your hands more useful in dissolving the virus.
 - Alcohol or any mixture with **alcohol over 65%** dissolves the fatty protection.
 - Any mixture of one part bleach and five parts water directly dissolves the protein, which breaks down the virus from the inside.
 - Hydrogen Peroxide dissolves the protein, but you have to use it pure, which can irritate your skin.
 - Bactericide and antibiotics do not kill the virus. The virus is not a living organism like bacteria; therefore antibodies cannot kill what is not alive.
-
- Never shake used or unused clothing, sheets or cloth. While it is glued to a porous surface, it is inert and disintegrates in **3 hours (fabric), 4 hours (copper and wood), 24 hours (cardboard), 42 hours (metal) and 72 hours (plastic)**. But if you shake cloth that contains the virus or use a feather duster, the virus molecules float in the air for up to **three hours**, and can lodge in your nose.

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- The virus molecules remain very stable in external cold or artificial cold (e.g., air conditioners in houses or cars). **One way to sanitize your car to park it in the sun with all the windows up and let the heat buildup in the car.**
- COVID-19 needs **moisture and darkness to stay stable**, Therefore, dehumidified, dry, warm and bright environments will degrade it faster.
This is one reason it is good for the sanctuary to be closed for a full week between uses. The virus will become unstable and decay and will not be a threat.
- UV (ultraviolet) light on any object where COVID-19 resides breaks it down.
- The virus cannot go through healthy skin.
- Vinegar is not useful because it does not break down the COVID-19's protective layer of fat.
- Most spirits (e.g., Vodka) do not break down the protective layer. Vodka is usually 40% alcohol, and at least 65% alcohol is needed to break down the protective layer.
- We will be minimizing singing within the sanctuary due to the fact that when we sing there is a chance of normal respiratory droplets becoming aerosolized and staying in the air longer (up to 3 hours).
- **The more confined the space, the more concentrated the virus.** The more open or naturally ventilated, the less the virus is concentrated. This is the reason we are reducing the time in the sanctuary which is an enclosed structure.
- You have to wash your hands before and after touching mucosa (facial liquids), food, locks, knobs, switches, remote control, cell phone, watches, computers, desks, TV, etc. Please be mindful of this and practice good hand hygiene.
- **Moisturize dry hands that can result from increased washing because the molecules can hide in the micro skin cracks. The thicker the moisturizer, the better.**
- Keep your nails short so that the virus does not imbed itself under your nails.
- **BATHROOM**-Bathrooms have a lot of high touch surfaces, door handles, faucets, stall doors. So fomite (Any inanimate object (as a towel, money, clothing, dishes, books or toys etc.) that can transmit infectious agents from one person to another) transfer risk in this environment can be high. It is not known whether a person releases infectious material in feces or just fragmented virus, but it is known that toilet flushing does aerosolize many droplets. Treat public restrooms with extra caution (surface and air).
- **COUGH**- A single cough releases about 3,000 droplets and droplets travel at 50 miles per hour. Most droplets are large, and fall quickly (gravity), but many do stay in the air and can travel across a room in a few seconds.
- **SNEEZE**- A single sneeze releases about 30,000 droplets traveling at up to 200 miles per hour. Most droplets are small and travel great distances (easily across a room).
- **SINGING**-aerosolizes respiratory droplets extraordinarily well. Deep-breathing while singing facilitated those respiratory droplets getting deep into the lungs.

RE-ENTRY PLAN

- **PLEASE NOTE**-MASKS, HAND SANITIZER, GLOVES, ETC. DO NOT NEGATE THE SOCIAL DISTANCING MANDATES. THESE ARE MERELY ADDITIONAL TOOLS TO ENSURE YOUR SAFETY. WHEN YOU WEAR MASKS, ETC. YOU MUST STILL FOLLOW THE SOCIAL DISTANCING PUBLIC HEALTH LAW MANDATES.

RESOURCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

Material obtained from the John Hopkins Hospital

Guidelines: Opening Up America Again – The White House and CDC

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>

Braddy, Ken. “24 Questions Your Church Should Answer Before People Return,” accessed 4/22/2020 <https://kenbraddy.com>

Bishop David Graves and the Cabinet of the Alabama-West Florida conference

“Guidelines for Places of Worship” www.alabamapublichealth.gov

“Guidelines for Returning to In-Person Worship” Alabama-West Florida Conference, May 12, 2020

Erin S. Bromage, Ph.D University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth
“Ecology of Infectious Diseases with Focus on SARS-CoV2”

Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting- Center for Disease Control (CDC)

RE-ENTRY PLAN

Situation Summary- CDC accessed 23 April 2020

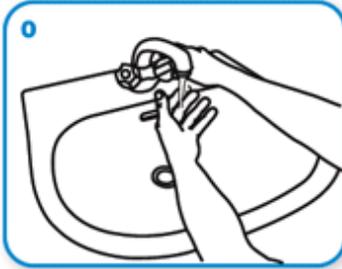
CDC – Guidance for Communities and Faith-based Organizations
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>

Singing, the Church, and COVID-19: A Caution for Moving Forward in Our Current Pandemic---Heather R. Nelson, Ph.D. www.drheathernelson.com

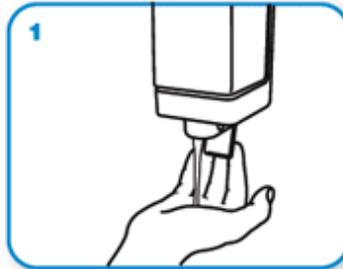


PLEASE!-NO Hugging, No Handshakes, NO CONTACT
Do NOT pass/share items in the sanctuary

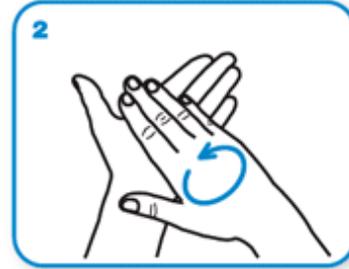
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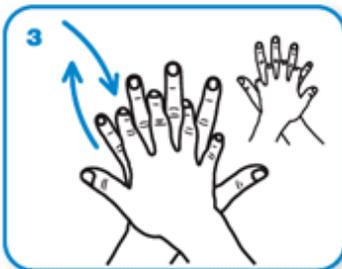
Wet hands with water



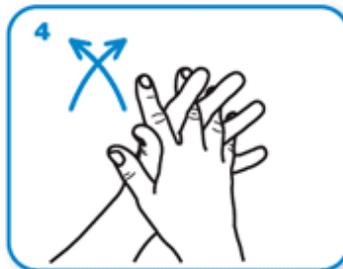
apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.



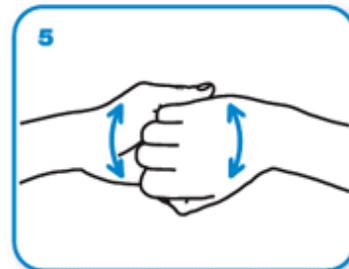
Rub hands palm to palm



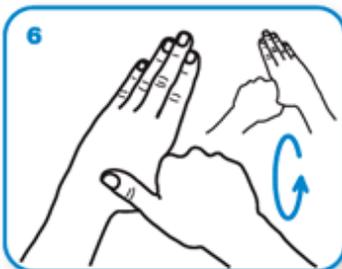
right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa



palm to palm with fingers interlaced



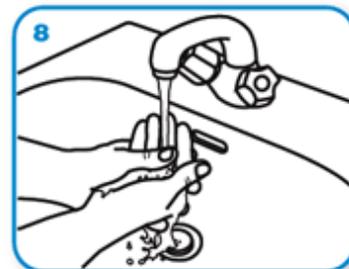
backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa



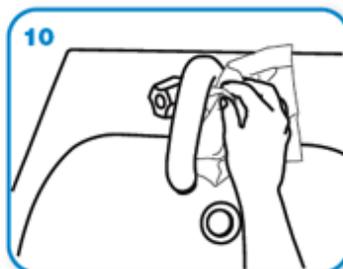
rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa.



Rinse hands with water



dry thoroughly with a single use towel



use towel to turn off faucet



...and your hands are safe.

RE-ENTRY PLAN

HOLD HARMLESS AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY FORM

I, _____, HEREBY ASSUME ALL OF THE RISKS OF PARTICIPATING IN ANY/ALL WORSHIP ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH Worshiping at **Westview Heights United Methodist Church** located in Ozark, Alabama, including by way of example and not limitation, any risks that may arise from negligence or carelessness on the part of the persons or entities being released, from dangerous diseases that may be present in the building, or because of their possible liability without fault.

I acknowledge that this Hold Harmless and Release of Liability Form will be used by the event holders, sponsors, and organizers of the activity in which I may participate, and that it will govern my actions and responsibilities at said activity.

In consideration of my application and permitting me to participate in this activity, I hereby take action for myself, my executors, administrators, heirs, next of kin, successors, and assigns as follows:

(A) I WAIVE, RELEASE, AND DISCHARGE from any and all liability, including but not limited to, liability arising from the negligence or fault of the entities or persons released, for my death, disability, personal injury, property damage, property theft, or actions of any kind which may hereafter occur to me including my traveling to and from this activity, THE FOLLOWING ENTITIES OR PERSONS: _____
Westview Heights United Methodist Church and/or their directors, officers, employees, volunteers, representatives, and agents;

(B) INDEMNIFY, HOLD HARMLESS, AND PROMISE NOT TO SUE the entities or persons mentioned in this paragraph from any and all liabilities or claims made as a result of participation in this worship activity, whether caused by the negligence of release or otherwise.

I acknowledge that they are NOT responsible for the errors, omissions, acts, or failures to act of any party or entity conducting a specific activity on their behalf.

I acknowledge that this activity may involve the possible exposure to the COVID-19 virus, and possibly other germs, viruses, and bacteria.

The Hold Harmless and Release of Liability Form shall be construed broadly to provide a release and waiver to the maximum extent permissible under applicable law.

RE-ENTRY PLAN

I agree to adhere to and follow the health laws in the state of Alabama in specific reference to the COVID-19 pandemic while on the premises of said church.

I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ THIS DOCUMENT AND I FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENT. I AM AWARE THAT THIS IS A RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND A CONTRACT AND I SIGN IT OF MY OWN FREE WILL.

Participant's Signature _____

Participant's Name (please print)

Date

(IF NECESSARY)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

(If under 18 years old, Parent or Guardian must also sign.)

