

# Building Reopening Update

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Members of the First Presbyterian Church Family,

This letter is to update you on the building reopening progress and the measures being taken to ensure that our reopening is done in a safe manner. As of **Sunday September 13th**, we will move to a revised version of Stage 3 of the Building Reopening Policy & Procedure. Science has proven effective means to decrease the transmission of this virus. Hopefully by now we have all been made fully aware of the need to embrace social distancing. We can also see the largest temporary reduction in the spread of COVID-19 in our area corresponding with the mask ordinance that was in place in Joplin from July 11th through August 17th. This evidence and the recommendations of the CDC have guided our Session in developing a plan to resume worship and the other ministries of the church as responsibly and informed as possible.

Our technology has played a large determining factor in the timing of this change. Our goal as we enter Stage 3 is to shift the focus of the worship service to an in person experience. In order to accomplish this, we have purchased new equipment to incorporate our existing PA System into the technology for live streaming. Now our sound will be simultaneously amplified in the sanctuary and recorded for broadcast. We are still in the process of figuring out how well the system will accommodate live music, so we do ask that you please bear with us as we iron out the kinks. They don't teach you about this stuff in seminary!

We also think it is important for us to convey what to expect as we make this transition. Thus far we have had a small, but dedicated crowd in worship during Stage 2. As that number increases during Stage 3, we encourage you to use the time before and after worship as you normally would. Take this time to catch up with friends and grow our community, all while continuing to respect the social distancing and mask requirements. Certainly, things will not be completely "normal," but we want to settle into a new normal which is comforting and inviting. In the attached document, you will find the highlighted differences which convey the changes as we transition from Stage 2 to Stage 3. The first page which follows this letter will share in plain language what to expect when you return to activities at First Presbyterian Church. The next document is a copy of the pertinent sections from our own official Building Reopening Policy and Procedure.

We look forward serving the ever-evolving needs of the church and even meeting some members who we have not yet been fortunate enough to see in person. If you have any questions regarding the Building Reopening Policy & Procedure (or anything else) please feel free to contact the church office.

Respectfully,  
Reverends Kira & John Anderson



## What to Expect during Stage 3:

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In our building, everyone is required to wear a face mask (mouth & nose must be covered) and physically distance. Extra masks are available in the church.

Apart from communion, no food or drink may be served.

Hand sanitizer is available throughout the building.

### Monday-Saturday:

- Church office & preschool continue regularly scheduled work hours.
- Committees, Bible Studies, and other gatherings may meet in the building as long as there are no more than 50 people in attendance.
  - They must follow physical distancing guidelines.
  - No food or drink can be shared. Individuals may bring their own individual water bottles, coffee mugs, and food but none can be shared with others.
  - As always please reserve the space through the church office.
  - Funeral services may be held in the sanctuary following the guidelines in place for Sunday morning worships. (marked off pews, no congregational singing, face masks to be worn, etc.) While in the sanctuary more than 50 people may be in attendance.

### Sunday Mornings:

- Church doors will be open by 9am.
- Sunday School meets in John Knox Hall from 9:15am-10:15am.
- People may gather to socialize before & after worship but must wear masks and distance.
- NO COFFEE or DONUTS will be served.
- **Worship** starts at 10:30am
  - The worship service will continue to be livestreamed on our YouTube channel as we have been doing. However, there will be less and less prerecorded music videos.
  - Seating is limited to promote physical distancing. Pews that are not to be used will be clearly marked. There is nothing in the pew backs.
  - Worship bulletins will be made available but not distributed by ushers. They are laid out on tables for individuals to pick up by the sanctuary doors.

## What to Expect during Stage 3:

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- Music: There is no congregational singing. Organ and piano will be played in the sanctuary. We may still share some prerecorded singing while we transition to soloists singing in the sanctuary. If soloists sing in person, they will be mindful of their proximity to others (most likely in the choir loft).
- Whether worshipping in person or over the livestream, everyone should be able to hear all the music played and what pastors/worship leaders say, pray, and preach.
- There will be no passing of the peace or passing of the plates.
- Contactless donations & tithing options are in place for in person worship & livestreaming.
- There is NO CHILDCARE. We hope children will join us for worship. We are working on making Child Worship Totes available for during worship. They will contain coloring sheets and other items for the children to use during worship. The nursery will not be open during worship until Stage 4.
- Worship services will return to being primarily designed as an in person experience. This means more communal prayers and liturgy will return.

# *Official Version of Stage 3 & 4 of* **Building Reopening Policy & Procedure** **for First Presbyterian Church Joplin**

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## **Stage 3**

In Stage 3 worship services will return to being primarily designed as an in person experience. We will continue to be cautious in worship and when gathering for other activities in the building by keeping some measures in place to limit physical interactions and the spread of disease. With that said, we recognize that being pushed to move our worship services online has had some positive outcomes. For example, people who previously were unable to come to church (before COVID-19) can worship with us again and feel better connected to their brothers and sisters in Christ. We are thankful for this which is why we will continue live streaming services. We hope those individuals will continue to watch the worship online.

Stage 3 will be in place for **at least** two weeks. We cannot move to Stage 4 without Session's approval.

- Worship returns to being focused on being an “in person” experience. (i.e. communal prayers, pastors not primarily looking into the camera, piano & organ played, etc.)
- Online live streaming of worship continues for the benefit of those unable to attend worship in person.
- Everyone entering First Presbyterian Church is **REQUIRED** to wear a face mask (non-surgical mask that cover the nose and mouth).
- No food or drink may be served.
- Sanctuary Seating will be limited to promote physical distancing. Pews that are not to be used will be clearly marked.
- There will be no congregational singing.
- All materials in pews will be removed and stored for future use. (inserts, hymnals, Bibles, pens, etc.)
- There will be no sign-in sheets, passing of the peace, or other physical contact with persons that live outside of individuals' households.
- Contactless donation and tithing options will continue to be in place.
- There will be no childcare provided. Children are encouraged to stay in worship with their family.
- Outside of worship, gatherings of 50 or less may resume. The limitation of 50 individuals pertains to all individuals at an event, except for funerals. Gatherings must apply physical distancing standards.
- People in church building are asked to continue following physical distancing standards: sitting and standing at least 6 feet apart from other individuals, with the exemptions of people living together.
- Individuals with a fever of over 100 degrees are not permitted in the church building. (Upon entry, people's temperatures will not be taken. We are asking in good faith that you adhere to this guideline. If you are concerned or uncertain about your temperature, please check it before coming into the building.)

- Individuals in the building that display symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, and loss of taste or smell will be asked to leave by pastors or staff.
- All equipment and surfaces, including microphones and pulpits, shall be disinfected after each use. All other frequently touched surfaces, including but not limited to counters, door handles, handrails, light switches, and restrooms will be disinfected regularly throughout the day. The Sanctuary and restrooms shall be disinfected daily, if used.
- Hand sanitization stations will be provided.

## **Stage 4**

All regular events and gatherings may resume at church.