

Policy for Reopening the Building of First Presbyterian Church Newport

Introduction to the Policy

All of God's people who gather at First Presbyterian Church Newport (FPCN) are responsible for their own level of comfort and safety as we take steps to reopen the church building. The Session of the church is responsible for the safety and use of our physical space, as well as those who gather here. As we seek to take cautious steps to reopen our church building, the Session will be making decisions regarding worshipping in person and building usage. Of course, the Session will keep all of God's people in mind when making these decisions. The Session's decisions are subject to change based on new information that arises and changes in our community's health situation. Any changes made in our reopening policy and schedule will be communicated to the whole community as soon as possible.

This policy includes recommendations from our Presbytery, insurance agencies, and Oregon health officials.

As we reopen our church building, we are well aware that it may be unsafe and inadvisable for certain people to join physically for worship for many weeks and months to come. Also, we will most likely be limited for some time in the number of people we can have in the building. Therefore, we will continue to gather online for worship each Sunday morning for the foreseeable future. We do not want to lose the gathered feeling and participation of everyone in our services, so we will try to create gatherings that will bring us together both in-person and online at the same time.

There is no way to know what the future holds with the current health issues of COVID-19. This policy is the start of reopening and will be in effect when the Session deems it safe to proceed in these ways. It will remain in effect as long as the Session recognizes it is safe to do so. If the community's health situation worsens, we will need to reconsider this policy. If the situation remains steady or improves, then we will consider a new policy for future steps to reopen our building.

The following policy will be implemented by the worship committee and the staff on behalf of and under the guidance of the Session.

Policy for Reopening of the Church Building

Preparing the Space:

- Before we gather again in person, we will have a professional cleaning of the entire church building.
- Special care will be given to the sanctuary and adjoining bathrooms.
- Because we will be meeting for worship only once a day and only every seven days, extensive cleaning and disinfecting between services is not required. Normal weekly cleaning will be needed.
- Disinfecting of commonly touched spaces, such as door handles, will be done after each gathering. Someone will be appointed to this task each Sunday.
- Protocol for those entering the sanctuary will be posted on the doors as well as next to the sign-in sheet. It will also be communicated to the congregation through mail and email before we gather. (See last page)
- The church building will remain closed except for the sanctuary and the adjoining bathrooms.
- We will put up signs and physical barriers to entrances of other church areas to ensure there is no access.
- The staff will continue to have access to the offices as needed and are responsible for taking physical distancing precautions and disinfecting their area after use.
- We will arrange the worship space so there are clear boundaries where people are able to sit in the pews, which will be a safe distance from others outside of their own household (people from the same household are welcome to sit next to each other).

Invitation and Precautions:

- The invitation to come gather physically for worship is extended to all, but we will limit our gatherings to 25 people. If you wish to gather with us in person, please let us know ahead of time by contacting the office or church leadership so we can monitor how many people we will be expecting.
- If more than 25 people come to worship, or if someone comes who has not contacted us ahead of time, we will need to turn them away for the safety of all. This is not something we look forward to doing, so please make arrangements ahead of time with church leadership.
- The Session will appoint someone to oversee the sign-up sheet. When staff or an elder is contacted by a person who wishes to join us at the church building for worship, they will contact this appointed person right away to make sure there are still less than 25 people who will be gathered.
- We would like to extend the first invitation to people who do not otherwise have access to our online service. Those who are sick or have any symptoms of

illness can not gather with us in person. Stay home to get well and keep us all safe. If you are ill and in need of assistance, please let us know and we will make sure you are taken care of.

- Those who are at higher risk for catching COVID-19 or having more severe symptoms should not gather with us at this time.
- Staff will continue to have access to the offices, including setting up meetings on campus, but working from home and distance meetings are strongly encouraged.

Precautions While Gathering:

- Paper or cloth coverings worn over the nose and mouth are required at all times for everyone in the building, with the exception of staff in their own office spaces or those leading worship from the chancel. Masks will be provided by the church for those who don't have them upon arrival.
- Everyone on campus will be required to use hand sanitizer when they enter the building and when they leave.
- There will be a sign-in sheet at the door so we can track who is gathered in person. This is important if someone becomes ill and we need to contact everyone who was present that day.
- A jar of at least 25 clean pens will be available so each person has a clean writing utensil with which to sing in. A basket will be provided for used pens, which will be sanitized after use.
- There will be a greeter at the door making sure everyone has a mask, is using hand sanitizer, and signs in. He/she will maintain a safe physical distance and direct people where to sit.
- The pews will be arranged to maintain physical distancing. Each pew will be open, but only on alternating sides (center aisle/side aisle).
- We will not approach each other for passing of the peace and we will not join in congregational singing together.
- We will not have any arranged children's activities at this time in person.
- We will use the overhead projectors instead of handheld materials.
- Those leading worship will not share equipment.
- We will not have common food or coffee. Instead, those gathered are welcome to chat in the sanctuary before and after the service from a safe distance.
- When we celebrate communion together, everyone is invited to bring their own juice and bread.

The next page is the page that will be posted at the door and next to the sign-in page

Procedures for Gathered Worship

Cloth or paper coverings are required to be worn over the nose and mouth.

Use hand sanitizer when entering and exiting the building.

Sign in at the door with a clean pen, which will be provided.

Sit only in the available, safely-distanced seating.

Connecting with others is encouraged, but from a safe distance of at least 6 feet.

The building is closed except the sanctuary and adjoining bathrooms.

Those who are sick or have symptoms of illness will not be permitted entrance for the safety of others. (If you are ill, please contact church leadership so we can make sure you are being taken care of.)

Please arrange for your attendance at gathered worship ahead of time with church leadership.