

Dear members and friends of Country Club UMC,

Our Health Team met last week to discuss opportunities for in-person gatherings and put together a plan for such gatherings. The safety and health of our congregation and our community is our number-one priority. I want to remind you that as a United Methodist, we are to follow our General Rules, the first of which is Do No Harm. At the same time, there is a great need and desire to connect and worship together. While everyone would like to return to worship as we did before the Covid-19 outbreak, we all know that in-person gatherings will require a different set of rules. These rules will allow us to monitor the effectiveness of social distancing, to reevaluate the needs of our congregation, to follow CDC guidelines and the rules of the city, county, state, and Missouri United Methodist Conference Office.

The bishop of the Missouri United Methodist Church has asked that we not resume in-person worship in our buildings before June 7, which is rapidly approaching. Here is our current plan with its rules:

**Morning Worship Sunday, May 31, 10:45:** We will continue to hold our online worship as we have been doing for the last three months.

**Outdoor Evening Prayer Service, May 31, 5:00 – 5:30 pm:**

Holding a service outdoors while maintaining physical distancing provides the lowest risk for in-person gatherings. We will gather on the south side of the building near the awning, using a PA system so all can hear. We will have prayers, scripture reading, music (but no group singing), and a dramatic Pentecost reading. If this service proves successful, we may schedule more such gatherings.

**Rules for the May 31 Service:**

1. If you are immunocompromised, or have heart, lung disease or diabetes, be safe and stay at home.
2. If you feel sick or if your temperature is over 100 degrees F, stay at home and quarantine yourself. There are many symptoms now associated with a Covid-19 infection: cough, shortness of breath, fever, loss of taste and smell, muscle pain, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.
3. Bring your own lawn chair (if you do not have a chair, contact the church office by May 29, and a chair will be provided).
4. Wear a mask at all times during the gathering. Homemade masks are acceptable. Children above the age of 2 should also wear a mask.
5. Maintain 6 feet of physical distance at all times.
6. Children must stay with their families during the gathering. There will be no nursery or child care available.
7. Bathrooms will be available for emergency only.

## **Worship Service on June 7, 10:45 – 11:30 am in sanctuary**

As long as there is no vaccine or treatment for Covid-19, there will always be a risk for gatherings of people, especially inside a building. Knowing that we cannot eliminate the risk by 100%, we feel we can lower the risk enough that we can worship together safely. Please abide by the following rules so that we can keep everyone as safe as possible as we worship together. Remember, if you feel for any reason you cannot attend the worship service, it will always be live-streamed through our website.

### **Rules for June 7 Worship Service:**

1. If you are immunocompromised, or have heart, lung disease or diabetes, be safe and stay at home.
2. If you feel sick or if your temperature is over 100 degrees F, stay at home and quarantine yourself. There are many symptoms now associated with a Covid-19 infection: cough, shortness of breath, fever, loss of taste and smell, muscle pain, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.
3. Wear a mask at all times during the worship, as well as before and after the service. Homemade masks are acceptable. Children above the age of 2 should also wear a mask. Greeters and ushers will wear masks.
4. Maintain 6 feet of physical distance at all times. The pews will be clearly marked as to where you may sit. Seating will be staggered within pew and between pews; at least every other pew will remain empty. Greeters and ushers can help.
5. There will be no bulletin or any other handout. The full order of worship will be presented on the screen, as usual, for congregational responses. Bibles and hymnals will be removed from pews where people will sit.
6. There will be no congregational singing.
7. Communion will be observed. We will use individual, pre-wrapped communion elements. Each person will pick up elements as he or she enters the sanctuary.
8. Offering plates will not be passed. A box or basket will be available at each door for you to place your offering as you leave.
9. Children must stay with their families during the service. There will be no nursery or child care available.
10. Bathrooms will be available, but for only one person at a time. Be sure to wash your hands for 20 seconds before leaving bathroom. (It will be a short service.)
11. Again, greeters and ushers will be available to guide you and answer any questions you might have.

While these are our current plans, the Health Committee will continue to monitor the rate of infection in Kansas City, CDC and local health guidelines, as well as any new rules established by our city, county, state or United Methodist Conference. If we have to make adjustments to the dates and rules of our planned gatherings, we will notify the congregation as quickly as possible.

We hope these plans will provide an opportunity for communion with God and one another. This will also be our first steps to explore what creative ways we can worship in

person now and in the future, while following the guidelines shared by our city and the CDC.

### **Continued Opportunities Through Country Club UMC**

**Online Worship:** We will continue to have our worship broadcast online each week at 10:45 am on Sundays. Remember, you are still connected to us at Country Club UMC even when you worship online. (Side note: our online worship has been watched or “attended” by a larger average number of people than in person before the outbreak.)

**Zoom Lobby:** We will continue to chat together following each Sunday worship service on our Zoom Lobby. Each week we will publish the connection information for that Zoom gathering.

**Small Groups:** We ask that small groups continue to meet virtually until we are able to provide space that is secure and sanitary enough to protect everyone. Many groups have found creative ways to connect; we encourage you to do so.

**Midweek Message:** The Midweek Message will continue on Wednesdays at 11:00 am until further notice.

**Giving:** If you can't attend our in-person gatherings, we invite you to support the congregation and its ministry by giving online at <https://countryclubumc.org/give/>. Here you can make both one-time contributions and set up a recurring donation. Ministry is continuing, albeit in new ways, and your offerings are still needed as much now as ever. You can also mail your offering to Country Club UMC, 400 W 57<sup>th</sup> Street, KCMO 64113.

**Needs or Concerns:** Please contact the church if you have any other questions and concerns. We are also ready to help you with any needs you might have.

We know that in-person gatherings will take grace, patience and space to reevaluate our plans, but this effort will be worth it if our congregation remains healthy and safe! And in any case, we are the body of Christ, perhaps separated by distance, but connected by the Holy Spirit.

As the U.S. approaches 100,000 coronavirus deaths, I offer my prayers for those who have died, those who are sick, those who have recovered and the front line workers seeking to heal those who are ill and working toward a cure.

In love and prayer,

Keith W Morgan  
Pastor

Health Team Members: Amelia Sorensen, Ken Starkey, Susan Fershee, Keith Morgan