

Re-Opening Guidelines for the Brookline Community Church

Introduction

Suspending in-person worship, meetings, and gatherings has helped us love our neighbor and ourselves by keeping everyone safe. As we begin the discernment process and create a plan for resuming in-person worship and re-opening the church building, the following guidelines are recommended to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

These guidelines have been developed with information from several resources:

- [Considerations for Communities of Faith](#) provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;
- The NH Covid-19 Reopening Guidance from the Governor's Economic Reopening Taskforce as described in the [Universal Guidelines](#), [Places of Worship](#), and NH Emergency Order 52 B-1 (dated June 15, 2020) documents;
- Information from the New England Conference, The United Methodist Church, Guidelines for In-Person Worship & Ministry during COVID-19;
- and the Covid-19 Liability FAQ, Covid-19 Phases, and Covid-19 Resource Guide provided by the Insurance Board.

Pandemics almost always come with peaks and valleys. What we believe to be safe today may turn out to be unsafe a month from now. Therefore, these guidelines are intended as a starting point. We will need to be flexible and make adjustments as we experiment and discover what is working for our specific situation. We will also need to incorporate changes and updates as they are presented by the local and national data and advisories.

Throughout the re-opening process, state and local trends should be monitored. Moving forward to the next phase of re-opening is recommended only when there is a downward trend of new cases for 14 consecutive days. If there is a rebound in the number of cases we will need to revert to the previous phase.

Summer 2020 (trial phase)

<p>Pre-worship</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs will be posted to inform all attendees of the symptoms of COVID-19 and to ask them to leave if they have any of the following risks: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Person has any of the symptoms of COVID-19: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Fever (feeling feverish or a document temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher); ii. Respiratory symptoms such as runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath; iii. Whole body symptoms such as muscle aches, chills, and severe fatigue; iv. Changes in sense of taste or smell b. Person has been in close contact with someone who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 in the past 14 days? c. Person has traveled in the past 14 days either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Internationally (outside the U.S.); ii. By cruise ship; or iii. Domestically (within the U.S.) outside of NH, VT, or ME on public transportation (e.g., bus, train, plane, etc.)
<p>Worship</p>	<p>Worship services should be held virtually, recorded from home, not inside the church building.</p> <p>Experiment with outdoor worship on July 12, 9:00 am <i>(Note: the building will remain closed – no use of the facility is allowed; it will not have been cleaned and disinfected to meet CDC guidelines)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent airborne transmission of germs. Masks are to be worn by all those in attendance, at all times. Masks will be provided. (No congregational singing or live performance will be included in the service. Pre-recorded music played over a sound system, piano, electronic keyboard, organ, stringed or percussion instruments will be allowed.) <i>(Note: It is strongly recommended that the Minister and Lay Reader wear a mask at all times. However, if it is not feasible, they may remove the mask when speaking, provided they remain 16 ft. from the closest person.)</i> • Seating will adhere to physical distancing guidelines of 6-ft (in all directions) between people not residing in the same household. Areas will be marked for guidance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Determine capacity of side lawn. If attendance exceeds capacity, Rev. Cath will repeat the service starting at 9:30 am • Prevent germ sharing via physical items (no communal handling of offering collection plates, hymnals, Bibles, communion elements, bulletins). If we do have bulletins, the person handling them will have sanitized their hands, and will wear gloves. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide a central location for the collection plate for individuals to drop off cash or checks for their offering • No sharing of AV Equipment (microphones, headsets, etc.). Disinfect with CDC approved wipes after each use.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent germ sharing via personal interaction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ no handshaking, passing of the peace, ○ no congregating before the service and no coffee hour after ○ create a traffic flow pattern to minimize close contact when entering/exiting • Hand sanitizer (60% alcohol) will be available <i>(incorporate lessons learned into a revised draft of the guidelines)</i>
Children, Youth Activities	It is difficult for children and youth to practice social distancing, therefore any nursery, child/youth activities should be suspended.
Mission & Outreach	All outreach to vulnerable populations should be done with physical distance and sanitation practices, including no sit-down meals until public gatherings are safe
Church Staff	Work remotely whenever possible. Minimal drop-in staffing for essential operations (collecting mail, processing payments, etc.). Presence on-site should be done with minimal overlap, physical distancing, wearing masks and gloves.
Church Groups	All meetings, Bible studies, etc. should be held remotely.
Outside Groups	The building remains closed to all outside organizations.

Fall 2020 (Phases 1 & 2)

Pre-worship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs will be posted to inform all attendees of the symptoms of COVID-19 and to ask them to leave if they have any of the following risks: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Person has any of the symptoms of COVID-19: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Fever (feeling feverish or a document temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher); ii. Respiratory symptoms such as runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, or shortness of breath; iii. Whole body symptoms such as muscle aches, chills, and severe fatigue; iv. Changes in sense of taste or smell b. Person has been in close contact with someone who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 in the past 14 days? c. Person has traveled in the past 14 days either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Internationally (outside the U.S.); ii. By cruise ship; or iii. Domestically (within the U.S.) outside of NH, VT, or ME on public transportation (e.g., bus, train, plane, etc.)
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Worship	<p>Worship services should continue to be available virtually</p> <p>Indoor in-person worship is Permissible per NH Emergency Order 52 & 52-B of June 15th 2020 allowing for a group gathering size of 50 percent of their normal operating seating capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent airborne transmission of germs. Masks are to be worn by all those in attendance, they will be provided. (No congregational singing or live performance will be included in the service. Pre-recorded music played over a sound system, piano, electronic keyboard, organ, stringed or percussion instruments will be allowed) • Seating will adhere to physical distancing guidelines of 6-ft (in all directions) between people not residing in the same household. Seating will be marked for guidance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Determine capacity of sanctuary and make plans for handling attendance if it exceeds capacity • Prevent germ sharing via physical items (no communal handling of offering collection plates, hymnals, Bibles, communion elements, bulletins). If we do have bulletins, the person handling them will have sanitized their hands, and will wear gloves. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a mechanism for on-line giving ○ Provide a collection plate at rear of church for dropping cash or checks in for collection ○ Use projection for liturgy/announcements/etc. instead of bulletins when possible • No sharing of AV Equipment (microphones, headsets, etc.). Disinfect with CDC approved wipes after each use.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent germ sharing via personal interaction the following activities are discouraged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Close physical contact with other attendees, staff, including handshaking, passing of the peace, ○ no coffee hours to keep congregating before or after the service to a minimum ○ create a traffic flow pattern to minimize close contact when entering/exiting ○ consider propping doors open or having a single volunteer wearing gloves handle the doorknobs • Hand sanitizer (60% alcohol) will be available
Children, Youth Activities	<p>It is difficult for children and youth to practice social distancing, therefore any nursery, child/youth activities continue to be suspended.</p>
Mission & Outreach	<p>All outreach to vulnerable populations should be done with physical distance and sanitation practices, including no sit-down meals until public gathering are safe</p>
Church Staff	<p>Work remotely whenever possible. Presence on-site should be done with minimal overlap, physical distancing, wearing masks and gloves. Staff and volunteers should only enter the building if they meet the criteria.</p>
Church Groups	<p>All meetings, Bible studies, etc. should be held remotely.</p>

<p>Outside Groups</p>	<p>The building remains closed to all outside organizations. In November we will start a trial phase of allowing Adult Groups (specifically AA) to meet in accordance with the following guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The maximum meeting capacity in Fellowship Hall during Covid is 20 • Recommended spacing between people is 6 feet apart • All persons must wear masks while in the building • All chairs and tables are to be wiped down with disinfectant and put away when meeting is over by the outside organization • All trash will be removed by the outside organization • All Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and supplies are to be provided by the outside organization.
<p>Building Tasks</p>	<p>Post CDC Infographic on hygiene throughout the building. Set a schedule for UV Light trained individuals to disinfect areas as they are utilized.</p>
<p>Kitchen</p>	<p>Discontinue the preparation and consumption of all food and beverages in the building until further notice. Exception for the preparation of food for church sponsored events (ie., Take Home Meals, Senior Luncheon pick-up and delivery meals)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow food safety protocols and best practices for Food Preparation. • Wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces dish-ware, utensils, food preparation surfaces, and beverage equipment after use. • Clean and disinfect floors, counters, and other used areas using EPA-registered disinfectants.
<p>Fellowship Hall</p>	<p>Fellowship hall will be disinfected with a UV Light after each use. <i>(Reminder: UV Light may only be operated by trained personnel.)</i></p>
<p>Sanctuary</p>	<p>Immediately after any use of the sanctuary (for worship, funerals, special services) the room will be disinfected with a UV Light. <i>(Reminder: UV Light may only be operated by trained personnel.)</i></p>
<p>Bathrooms</p>	<p>All three bathrooms will be disinfected with an approved CDC disinfecting cleaner/spray.</p>
<p>Cleaning/Disinfecting</p>	<p>Acquire a three-month supply of needed CDC/EPA approved products with a re-order/re-purchase plan before items are depleted.</p> <p>Individuals are responsible for cleaning high touch surfaces after each use. <i>(Gloves and disinfecting wipes will be provided)</i></p>
<p>Ventilation Systems</p>	<p>Increase circulation of outside air by opening windows, using fans.</p>
<p>Water Supply</p>	<p>Ensure water systems are safe for use after any prolonged period of being shut down – having limited use.</p>