

COVID-19 CHURCH REOPENING PROTOCOLS

Effective May 23, 2021

To provide a protected and safe environment for worshipers to gather for in-person worship and as an expression of our love for our neighbor, St. Andrew's will take the following steps as a next phase during the COVID-19 pandemic. As the situation evolves and additional information becomes available, these measures will be modified appropriately. This document reflects current information as of 05/18/2021.

General Protocols (applicable to *all* sections)

- All persons are welcome in the St. Andrew's UMC building
- **Hours:** The Church will be open for business Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
- Guests will need to use the intercom at the Crawford Street or alley entrances to enter the building during business hours
- **Masks:** As an expression of our Christian love for our neighbors, everyone in the building (regardless of vaccination status) is highly recommended to wear a mask that completely covers their nose and mouth, unless they are medically or otherwise exempt; face masks will be available at the Welcome Center
- **Safe Distancing:** All persons in the building shall practice safe distancing of at least six feet from others not part of their household
- **Handwashing:** Frequent handwashing (with soap and water for 20 seconds) and/or sanitization is strongly recommended; stations are provided around the building
- Individuals who are ill or exhibiting symptoms (fever or chills, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, new loss of taste or smell, etc.), who are more likely to become severely ill, who live with someone at a higher risk, who have underlying medical conditions that increase the risk or severity of COVID-19, or who are pregnant are encouraged to conduct their business remotely (phone, online, mail, etc.)

Public Worship

- All people are invited to and welcome at in-person public worship at St. Andrew's UMC, as well as online on our Facebook page and website and our radio broadcast on WFIN
- Individuals who are ill or exhibiting symptoms (fever or chills, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, new loss of taste or smell, etc.), who are more likely to become severely ill, who live with someone at a higher risk, who have underlying medical conditions that increase the risk or severity of COVID-19, or who are pregnant are encouraged to participate in our radio or online worship options

- **Entrances:** The Crawford Street entrance and alley automatic door will be the entry points for the building; the Sandusky Street doors may be used for exiting the building
- **Safe Distancing:** Worshipers are strongly recommended to sit in household groups in the Sanctuary and to maintain a safe distance of at least six feet from others not part of their household while in the building
- **Masks:** As an expression of our love for our neighbors, worshipers in the building are highly recommended to wear a mask that completely covers your nose and mouth, unless they are medically or otherwise exempt
 - While the CDC states that fully vaccinated people are not required to wear face masks, face masks are highly recommended for all at St. Andrew's, since we will not expect people to reveal their vaccination status, risk factors, or comfort level; this act would demonstrate hospitality to and Christian concern for others who are vulnerable
 - Face masks will be available at St. Andrew's and offered to those without one
 - Masks are not recommended for children under 2 or those with breathing difficulties
- Worshipers should refrain from physical contact with others not in their household (e.g., shaking hands, fist bumps, hugging, etc.)
- Announcements will be available on the screen before and after worship services, and *The Messenger* will be available on our website or will be mailed as requested in the Church Office
- Offering plates and baskets for Connection cards (for attendance) will be available at the doors on the north and south sides of the Sanctuary
- Ushers will be available to assist worshipers
- When possible, greeters may open doors for worshipers entering and exiting the building, or weather-permitting, the doors may be propped open for reduced contact
- **Congregational Singing:** The congregation will be invited to sing congregational songs and are highly recommended to wear a mask while doing so
- **Special Music:** Special music may be offered by soloists or ensembles that can maintain a safe distance of six feet from one another and 20 feet from the congregation (these should be observed during rehearsals also); if necessary, pieces may be prerecorded for inclusion in the worship service
- **Choral/Group Singing:** Choral groups will not resume under "Red" condition; however, under "Orange/Yellow," choral groups may rehearse and sing with appropriate safe distancing and masks, including during services; the Church will provide appropriate masks; seating arrangements will be adapted

- **Children/Nursery:** Children are always welcome to attend worship and sit with their families, though parents are welcome to remain in our Nursery with their child if they desire (the service may be seen in the Nursery); Nursery and childcare services are not being provided at this time
- Socializing is strongly encouraged to occur in safe, socially distant ways, preferably outside the building
- **Sanitization:** The Sanctuary, restrooms, Nursery (if used), and other high traffic areas will be sanitized between worship services

Groups

- Church groups and outside groups may resume meetings in the building in spaces of adequate size to allow for safe distancing; group members are highly recommended to wear masks (unless exempt) at all times and to practice safe distancing; groups may choose to continue meeting online using Zoom; we anticipate offering the option of “hybrid meetings” (with some in-person and some on Zoom) soon
- No shared food may be served
- Rooms must be reserved in advance with the Church Office; available rooms include Atrium, Fellowship Hall, 201, 203, 204, Library, Sanctuary, and Annex
- Groups who fail to observe necessary protocols may be barred from use of the church building for a period of time or indefinitely
- At this time, only “grab and go” style meals or prepackaged food may be served at the church

Modifications

- These protocols will be revised from time-to-time as new information becomes available on (1) local case rates, (2) local vaccination rates, (3) current scientific data and understandings, and (4) other related factors and as other circumstances change
- Should the pandemic situation become increasingly worse, the Pastor, in consultation with the Church Council and Staff, reserves the right to add protocols, suspend aspects of church life, or take other necessary action with limited notice
- The Pastor, Church Staff, and Church Council will periodically review the situation and refine these protocols as needed

Sources

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- Sing! The Center for Congregational Song, <https://congregationsong.org/covid-updates-congregational-song/>, 04/19/2021. Accessed 04/23/2021.
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In addition, current protocols being used by several area churches were reviewed.