

Greenwoods Community Church

Guidelines for Indoor Worship Gatherings

(October 2020)

After a summer of practical experience with outdoor worship gatherings at Greenwoods, as well as with the State guidelines and public health advisories applicable to such gatherings, we feel well positioned for a transition to indoor worship now that outdoor weather conditions are becoming less hospitable.

For the most part we will be adhering to the same precautions and procedures inside that we have become used to outside. Despite initial optimism about an early end to the pandemic, there is no indication that COVID-19 will be going away, or even getting better, anytime soon. If anything, the fall and winter seem likely to bring increased risks of infection, and even after a vaccine becomes widely available – whenever that may be – public health authorities advise that careful adherence to social distancing, mask wearing and other current precautions will remain important elements in controlling transmission of the virus for a long time to come.

Since the virus transmission risks involved in gathering for in-person worship have not changed materially since June, these Indoor Worship Guidelines closely track the Outdoor Worship Guidelines with which we have all become familiar over the last four months.

Outdoor Guidelines Applicable Indoors:

- Those who are sick, who have underlying health conditions, or are in high risk groups for coronavirus infection (65 or over, diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, or otherwise immunocompromised, etc. – the “vulnerable”), as well as those who remain uncomfortable in group situations at this time, are advised to remain at home and enjoy our live streamed service from there.
- Social distancing and mask use protocols will remain the same (see additional detail below).
- Still no congregational singing or live vocal performances. Recorded music from GCC soloists or other Christian artists will be encouraged.
- Concert of Prayer unchanged.
- No opening greeting between members.
- Offering on line or by plates on tables at rear of sanctuary.

- Communion by individual wafer/juice packets.
- Child care and Sunday School remain suspended. All children will need to sit with their parents during the service.
- All food service before and after the morning worship, including coffee/tea/cocoa, etc. and fellowship meals, remains suspended.
- Bathroom use, limited to the two main downstairs bathrooms, will continue to be on an emergency basis only.
- All in-person church meetings and activities (other than the Sunday morning service itself) will remain suspended, with the exception of First Wednesday Prayer and our Monday Revival Prayer meetings, which will continue to meet in the foyer area to avoid the need for extra cleaning of the sanctuary and other parts of the facility. (If numbers at these meetings increase, other arrangements will need to be made.) Boards and committees may make their own decisions about meeting via Zoom or other remote means.

New Indoor Specifics:

- To the extent consistent with outside temperatures, the sanctuary will be kept wide open (windows, double doors to the foyer and Fellowship Hall, double doors to the parking lot, emergency exit) to maximize air circulation, with fans on.
- We'll maintain one-way flow as much as possible, entering the building through the foyer doors, proceeding directly into the sanctuary, and taking seats as far forward as possible consistent with the social distancing guidance below. At the end of the service we'll leave the building either through the foyer doors or the emergency exit, without stopping to socialize until we are in the parking area.
- As explained under *Occupancy Limitations* below, only 25 people can currently be accommodated in the sanctuary. Overflow seating for a maximum of 14 more will be in Fellowship Hall.
- A no-contact forehead thermometer will be available at the foyer entrance doors.
- Masks will be provided by the church for those who arrive without them, but we encourage you to remember to bring your own!
- Clearly marked hand sanitizer stations will be located at entrances and exits, and elsewhere as appropriate. Members are encouraged to bring their own sanitizer whenever possible.
- Standard social distancing will apply both inside and outside the building:
 - Every other pew will be closed off with tape.

- Sit six feet apart within pews (i.e. no more than three people per pew, except that family groups should sit together, maintaining social distancing between groups and other individuals or groups outside their families).
- Try to occupy pews without skipping spaces within them; latecomers won't be able to fill in without compromising social distancing.
- Parents should keep their children with them inside the building, and are responsible for ensuring observance of social distancing and mask wearing guidelines both indoors and out whenever their children are interacting with the children of other families.
- No paper church bulletins or other handouts will be distributed or made available, including *Daily Bread*, mission fliers and special offering envelopes. Hymnals will be removed for the time being; pew bibles will be left in place since they will be touched only once a week by worshipers and only with gloves by cleaners.
- Congregation will be requested to leave after the service one pew at a time, starting at the back, to avoid lines and gathering.
- Please avoid use of the coat closet off the foyer; keep coats and other belongings with you in the sanctuary so you don't need to make a detour while exiting.
- Space limitations make properly distanced socializing inside the building virtually impossible without interfering with others' freedom to move around. Outdoor socializing in the parking lot before and after the service is encouraged. Weather permitting, Pastor and Elders will join others in the parking area (not in the aisles, by the back doors to the sanctuary or in the foyer) following the service.
- Services will be live streamed (using a single forward-facing stationary camera that will not show anyone except the Pastor and other platform participants) for those choosing not to attend in person, with a recorded version posted on line shortly after the end of the service.
- Special cleaning (apart from an initial professional deep cleaning of the entire building before our first regathered service, cleaning of the foyer after prayer meetings, and wipe-downs of the bathrooms after any use) is not expected to be required, assuming we have a single Sunday morning service each week and little to no other use of the building between Sundays. Any mid-week use of the building, including quick in-and-out visits, should be cleared with Pastor Trip ahead of time.
- Inevitably, use of our facility for indoor worship under coronavirus conditions will involve more work for more people than either outdoor worship or regular services in the good old days. Volunteers will be needed to help with cleaning, greeting, communion setup, ushering and a variety of other tasks that will only become obvious as we gain experience with the new procedures. If you would be willing to help out as needs arise, please speak to Pastor Trip or one of the Elders.

Further Information and Reminders

Occupancy Limitations: Since Greenwoods has no occupancy permit on record with the Sheffield building department, our current occupancy limit for indoor services and other uses of the facility is established by “accessible space” and “enclosed space” formulas specified in the current Massachusetts Phase 3 Reopening Guidelines for places of worship. Application of those formulas to our measured square footages (after resolving certain ambiguities in favor of higher totals) results in the following capacity limits:

<u>Building total</u>	<u>39</u>
Sanctuary	25
Fellowship Hall	9
Food service area	3
Foyer	2
Kitchen	2
Large S.S. classroom	3
Rear S. S. classroom	1
Cloakroom	1
Nursery 1	1
Nursery 2	1
Nursery 3	1

How Does this Work?

- Count both staff and congregation, and both adults and children.
- Building limit is calculated separately from, and is less than, the total of the individual limits for the various enclosed spaces within it. We can't increase the building total by spreading people out into more rooms.
- Limits apply independently to each listed space. We can't “borrow” from one space to increase the permitted capacity of another, except when spaces can be physically combined as suggested below.
- These limits override the six-foot rule (although social distancing is still required). Thus only 25 people may be in the sanctuary at one time, or three in the large

Sunday School classroom, even though more could easily fit with six-foot spacing between them.

Practical Consequences:

- If the doors between Fellowship Hall, the food service area and the foyer are opened so all three areas arguably function as a single “enclosed space,” it appears that the space’s permitted capacity would be 14. This will apparently allow up to 39 people to be accommodated for a worship service, 25 of them in the sanctuary and 14 in Fellowship Hall, as long as no additional people are present anywhere else in the facility at the same time.
- Given the numbers who have been attending our outdoor services during the summer, this would appear to be adequate for our current needs, although it seems likely that we will need some overflow seating in Fellowship Hall on typical Sundays. If attendance increases enough to approach the building limit of 39 before the Massachusetts occupancy formulas are liberalized, we will need to institute some form of pre-registration system to ensure that no one has to be turned away at the door in order to stay below the applicable building occupancy maximum.
- In view of the very low capacity limits for the Sunday School and nursery rooms, it seems clear that neither Sunday School classes nor nursery care will be possible until the Massachusetts occupancy formulas are modified.
- Although the State Guidelines don’t say so, presumably all of these capacity limits are intended to apply to occupancy for more than just a few seconds or minutes as people are passing through: i.e. if two people are in the kitchen cleaning up after communion, a third person should be able to walk through on the way to one of the rear Sunday School rooms, but would not be able to remain in the kitchen and wash dishes at the sink without exceeding the 2-person limit.

Mask Policy: Masks for all those over the age of five must be worn within the building, including by the Pastor and Elders and anyone else participating in the service. Masks are encouraged for children between the ages of two and five at the discretion of parents. Outdoors, masks are recommended at all times, and are required (except within family groups) whenever distancing is not being practiced.

Contact Tracing: For purposes of contact tracing in the event anyone attending a Greenwood’s service later tests positive for COVID-19, we will continue to keep a record, either manually or photographically, of everyone who attends and where they sit. Visitors whose contact information is unknown to us will be asked to provide it by filling out one of our visitor cards and dropping it in the offering plate as they exit.

Assumption of Risk: *We have been advised that it is helpful from the point of view of potential church liability to be sure that all who choose to attend our regathered services are made aware that despite our best efforts, there are still risks involved. These Guidelines represent what well informed public and church authorities consider to be appropriate protective measures in the way of social distancing, mask wearing, cleaning and sanitizing. We cannot, however, completely eliminate the risk of exposure to coronavirus infection at an in-person worship service. By choosing to participate, you are assuming whatever risk such participation entails of exposure to infectious and communicable diseases.*