

The sacrifices our Church of the Saviour family has made both in their personal and religious lives in order to honor the guidelines of the State of Ohio have been exemplary. It has been the position of the Senior Pastor and the Servant Leadership Board to voluntarily follow public gathering guidelines, which means since Friday, March 13 our church building has been closed and we have asked our congregation to stay home. Our decision to close and stay home best aligned with the guidelines of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Ohio Department of Health (ODH), but it also aligned with Jesus' command to love God and love neighbor.

The following is a proposed plan for reopening our building. This plan is, by design, open to change. As we learn more and new directives are given, we will comply. Nothing in this document is to be considered an absolute as the current COVID-19 situation is fluid and continues to evolve. Like any plan, changes are likely and may require additional details. We will learn every step of the way and adjust our efforts accordingly – all with your safety, physical and spiritual health in mind.

We understand none of this is ideal. We all yearn for community and gathering as before, and we hope to return as soon as possible. For now, we are making our decisions based on the overall health, safety, and protection of our people.

Below are pieces of our plan for reopening the building. Given that it is still a work in progress, there are some pieces yet to be developed or released.

Understanding of Phases (set by our national/state government)

- Phase 1 - No more than 10 people gathering in one place with strict distancing guidelines.
- Phase 2 - No more than 50 people gathering in one place with moderate distancing guidelines.
- Phase 3 - No limitations on number of people but still using distancing guidelines.

Tentative Dates set by Church of the Saviour's Servant Leadership Board:

These tentative dates are part of the current plan (subject to change as the situation evolves). Greater detail about each follow in this document.

- Phase 1 - Began May 1 (church building is closed)
- Phase 2 - Begins June 1
- Phase 3 - The Board will reassess by June 30.
- Phase 4 - Phase Four is the hope of returning to worship without restrictions or being required to distance ourselves in community. Of course a date cannot be predicted, but we look forward to a time when we can gather again fully as the body of Christ.

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Worship:

- Phase 1 - Online worship
- Phase 2 - Online worship will continue
- Phase 3 - Worship services will vary. Online worship will continue. During this season and beyond, we recognize many within our congregation are unable or not yet comfortable to return to public worship. We want to make sure ALL are able to stay connected and participate in the life of our church. Online worship will remain an option for our church family that chooses to stay home. In addition to online worship, we will offer varied worship services. The worship services will vary in times, styles, and length.
- Phase 4 - Online worship will continue. Worship in our sanctuary setting will take place without distancing limitations.

Building Usage Policy (Worship and other activities):

- Phase 1 - Building Closed.
- Phase 2 - Building Closed. Specific, scheduled groups will be granted access during phase 2. They are to follow strict guidelines described below.
- Phase 3 - Building will open under supervision and direction of Servant Leadership Board and Trustees.
- Phase 4 - Building will be open.

Phase 2

- Building is closed for most activity.
- Specific, scheduled groups will be granted access during phase 2. They are to follow strict guidelines described below.
- Groups are not to be in building without approval of either Senior Pastor, Director of Operations, or Chair of Trustees. Our staff is working together to determine which groups are allowed.
- Groups must be placed on the master church calendar after approval.

Phase 2 General building usage policy

1. Group leader will provide each attendee with self-screen evaluation for health. If “yes” for any question, member should not attend. (Leaders will have the questionnaire)
2. Chairs should be arranged to maintain 6-foot distance; no additional tables should be set up.
3. Attendees will wear masks. This is mandatory during phase 2.
4. Group will all use the assigned entrance. Leader will instruct you on which door to enter.
5. Leader or designated member shall clean and sanitize chairs after use.
6. Only one rest room will be open for a meeting. Limit one person per rest room at a time. Following use, individual should sanitize door handles, faucet handles, and flush handles. We will do a full clean on rest rooms once per day.
7. For meetings in the Sanctuary, Library, or Fellowship Hall, the rest rooms off of the narthex will be open. For Youth Lounge, Chapel, or Music Room meetings, the rest rooms near the office will be open.

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8. Kitchen is not available. Food and coffee are NOT to be provided for meetings.
 - a. Staff is exempt.
9. We ask that rooms other than the designated meeting room are not to be used or entered. If the room is entered, the room will need to be cleaned.

Cleaning protocol: Cleaning supplies will be found in each meeting room.

The cleaning protocol is still being developed. Further details and training plans to come.

1. Wear gloves (church provides)
2. Use spray bottles and wipes to clean all hard surfaces such as chairs and tables. Also sanitize cloth in chairs.
3. Return cleaning supplies to location in the room where you found them.

Comment: This is a condition for use of the building. If a group does not comply, they may not be granted future access. There are risks to returning. We are trying our best and continue to make adjustments as needed, but cannot guarantee we won't miss things. None of us have done this before. We must therefore rely on each other – and our mutual patience and trust – to see this plan to success.

Phase 3

Worship Guidelines

Online worship will continue. During this season and beyond, we recognize many within our congregation are unable or not yet comfortable to return to public worship. We want to make sure all are able to stay connected and participate in the life of our church. Online worship will remain an option for our church family that needs to stay home.

Worship together as a community will resume during Phase 3. Worship times, styles, and length of services will vary to accommodate guidelines. There will be noticeable differences in all of our services, all to maintain the safety and health for our congregation.

Worship Space Adjustments

- Doors will be open.
- Distanced seating will be used.
- Communication sheets, hymnals, Bibles, paper, and pencils will be removed from all chairs and pews.

Worship Adjustments

- Everyone will be encouraged to wear masks.
- It will be a touchless experience.
 - Greeters will hold doors open but will not shake hands.
 - Ushers will direct worshipers to their seats, starting at the front of the sanctuary.

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- There will be no handouts. Hymnals, Bibles, communication sheets, scribble pads, pencils, and envelopes will be removed from the pew racks. Screens will be used to guide worship or participants may download the order of worship on an electronic device. Worshipers will be encouraged to mark attendance online.
- There will be no passing of the peace or offering plates. On-line giving will be encouraged or a box at the sanctuary doors will be available for people to drop their offering.
- At the conclusion of the worship service, Pastors will dismiss worshipers by row, beginning at the back of the sanctuary. Pastors will not shake hands.
- We will not congregate in the lobbies before or after services (smiling and waving is encouraged!)
- Holy Communion and Baptisms. The Pastoral staff is still working through the details of how to officiate a holy sacrament within our new safety guidelines.
- Funerals and weddings will be handled on an individual basis. These decisions will be made by the Senior Pastor in consultation with trustees and operations.
- A maximum of 50% capacity will be used for all worship spaces.
- There will be no gathering place. No coffee or food will be served. Fellowship Hall will be closed.
- Vocal singing will be limited to worship leaders only. Congregational singing will resume when it is safe to do so.

Please note: During Phase 1, 2 and 3, “at risk” individuals are encouraged to continue to worship online, although each person will make their own informed decision. Anyone with cold, allergy, or flu-like symptoms should stay home and worship online. If you have a temperature greater than 100 degrees, please stay home.

Sunday School and Childcare

At the onset of phase 3, we will not offer Sunday school for adults or children and there will be no childcare initially. We regret having to make this decision, and are working to create safe environments for our children. We have a team designated to understand the guidelines and recommendations and will adjust as we learn more. But at this time, childcare will not be available.

Phase 2 and 3

Church Staff:

The church staff has continued to work tirelessly during the building closure. In many cases, our dedicated staff has had a significant increase in work hours. Every staff member has risen to the challenge of this unusual time.

The staff will begin limited use of the building following specific guidelines. Many will continue to work from home as much as possible. Staff will be available by email. Office personnel hours will happen by appointment, but if they can be done online or on the phone, we will encourage people to avoid meeting in person.

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What about my group? When can we meet together?

The pace is going to be slow. We would rather err on the side of caution than on personal desire to return to our community. We were created for community. We all want to be together, but our leadership is carefully and prayerfully looking at all we do as a church to determine the safest, healthiest, next steps for returning together. Again, none of us have done this before. We must rely on each other and our mutual patience and trust as we make decisions, and move our plan forward. We are learning every step of the way and are adjusting our efforts accordingly, all with your safety and health (physical and spiritual) in mind.

Discipleship groups, small groups, children's discipleship and activities, classes, women and men's groups, and special interest groups are all to remain online. As we move into Phase 3, our leadership team will better determine how we are able to safely accommodate the needs of each group. When we allow for more groups to gather in our building is still to be determined. If your group is having trouble getting online, or you would like to be a part of an online group, please reach out to our Director of Discipleship, Margaret Butler at margaret.butler@cos-umc.org. We are happy to train you or help you get connected.

We are still called to make disciples of Jesus Christ. We are called to love our Lord God with our all and to love our neighbor. We will continue to live out this mission within this crisis season and beyond. We are still the church.

Thank you for all you do for the Church and our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ. Any questions or comments, feel free to email members of the Servant Leadership Board:

Senior Pastor, Jenn Lucas - jenn.lucas@cos-umc.org

Servant Leadership Board chair, Ben Feldmeyer – ben.feldmeyer@uc.edu

Associate Pastor, Vicki Robinson – vicki.robinson@cos-umc.org

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