

Stepping Forward
Local Option
July 12, 2021

Based on the available options, FGUMC, at present, intends to follow Option 2: A Commitment to Safe Local Practices for Churches and other Ministries, as outlined in the Stepping forward safely in love and trust document released on May 5, 2021. This will replace the Reimagining Life plan previously put into place for FGUMC.

As leaders of Forest Grove United Methodist Church, we accept the responsibility to carefully study, plan and implement safe local practices for our church/ministry outside the basic standard practices shared across the Greater Northwest Area, but consistent with the CDC and governmental guidance. We understand that we are still responsible to plan within the parameters defined below, in dialogue with our district superintendent or director of connectional ministries as questions or concerns emerge.

Additional Commitments

- **We affirm that as followers of Jesus, we are responsible** for living our lives and conducting our ministries with care for the safety, health and well-being of ourselves and others.
- **We will monitor and follow the latest CDC guidance** (especially relating to hygiene, masking, and distancing), considering the risk factors they identify and take all reasonable steps to eliminate or mitigate those risks.
- **We will also work within parameters required by local and state governments** and those established by our accrediting/licensing bodies.
 - We will not use privileges accorded religious organizations to exempt ourselves from science-based restrictions applied to non-religious civic organizations of similar function.
- **We will follow the more cautious standards** in instances where CDC guidelines and local/ state governments differ.
- **We will monitor and respond to changes in local risk**, regularly tracking data from [CovidActNow](#) and updates from state and local municipalities.
- **We will continue to offer accessible worship and meeting options**, as possible, for those who are vulnerable, not yet ready to return in person, or newly engaged through our virtual witness.
- **We will have a plan to clearly and positively communicate** with members, constituents, and the public our practices for reopening, and for stepping back as merited.
- **We will refrain from indoor congregational singing** until permitted by the Guidelines for Safe Singing (see appendix).

We, the undersigned, make these commitments as leaders in this work for our ministry setting. (Digital signatures are acceptable, continued on next page.)

Pastoral/Executive Leader(s)

Additional signers – at least three relevant key leaders (e.g., board or council members, COVID-19 response team members)

As district superintendent/director of connectional ministries, I have received this commitment. I will continue to hold this ministry in prayer, offering my direct support in answering questions and providing resources to support their careful work of living into these commitments.

Signature of district superintendent or director of connectional ministries

General Health and Safety:

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and shared objects between uses.
- Avoid use of items that are not easily cleaned or sanitized.
- Ensure correct application of disinfectants and keep them away from children.
- Ensure adequate ventilation when using disinfectants.
- Stay at least 6 feet apart from those who do not live with you.
- Fully vaccinated congregants and leaders do not need to wear masks indoors or outdoors. Congregants are encouraged to wear masks indoors. Church should provide masks for worship services if needed or requested by individual congregants.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Ensure that sufficient supplies are available in the bathroom spaces including, but not limited to: soap, water, material for drying hands, tissues, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and no-touch foot pedal operated trash cans.
- Encourage vaccination when available.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissue or the inside of one's elbow.
- Provide physical guides indoors that show where household groups or users may sit and arrows to show direction of travel.
- Seating should maintain safe physical distancing of 6 feet between individuals from different households.
- Encourage staff and volunteers to stay home when sick with COVID or if exposed to an individual with COVID symptoms.
- Provide staff and volunteers with an electronic option for participating in meetings or completing work; if possible.
- Notify local health officials if a person enters the church facility and exhibits COVID symptoms.
- Notify individuals who came into contact with an individual who exhibits COVID symptoms while in the church facilities.

Fellowship:

- Avoid self-serve options for food.
- Use prepackaged food and drink.
- Use disposable food service items and utensils.

Indoor Worship:

- Maximum capacity is 75% or maximum occupancy for the designated location.
 - For benches or pews - utilize one person for each 18 inches of bench or pew length.
 - Concentrated (chairs only) – allow 7 square feet net area per person
- A minimum of 6 feet of distance in all directions between household groups.
- Prevent people from different households from meeting/crowding in any area of the facility (indoors or outdoors).
- Masks is encouraged, but not required for fully vaccinated people. Unvaccinated adults are asked to wear a mask.
- Children aged 5 and older are required to wear a mask unless they are vaccinated. In the presence of unvaccinated children, others are encouraged to wear masks as a sign of hospitality.
- It is recommended that doors and windows be opened during the meeting to allow for better ventilation when possible.
- Consider using a stationary offering box/basket monitored by an usher.

- Singing is limited to no more than a duet. If they are distanced at least 20 feet from the congregation, they need not be masked, if vaccinated.
- Physical contact between members of the different households is discouraged.
- Communion:
 - Prepackaged elements may be handed out for communion, but the contents may not be consumed in person during the worship service. Follow guidelines provided by the Greater Northwest Area.
 - According to OHA (Oregon Health Authority):
 - Communion ministers must wear a mask and wash hands thoroughly or use hand sanitizer.
 - Avoid touching communicant's hands while distributing communion.
 - Use of a common cup is not recommended. Distribute communion in separate cups spread far enough apart to allow communicants to select a cup without touching the others.
 - Communicants should remain at least 6-feet between themselves and others of different households.
- Baptism may take place with everyone wearing masks and maintaining a 6-foot distance between households. Pastor maintains a 6-foot distance except during administration of water. Follow guidelines provided by the Greater Northwest Area.
- There will be no use of the water fountain.
- Provide an option for virtual participation in the worship service.

Outdoor Worship:

- The maximum number of participants is 300.
- A minimum of 6 feet of distance in all directions between household groups.
- Masks is encouraged, but not required for fully vaccinated people. Unvaccinated adults are encouraged to wear a mask.
- Children aged 5 and older are required to wear a mask unless they are vaccinated.
- Hymnals and bibles may not be used. Provide handouts in a one-time use format. These should be handed out by ushers.
- Consider using a stationary offering box/basket monitored by an usher.
- Live singing can take place with 6-foot distancing.
- Physical contact between members of the different households is discouraged.
- Communion:
 - According to OHA (Oregon Health Authority):
 - Communion ministers must wear a mask and wash hands thoroughly or use hand sanitizer.
 - Avoid touching communicant's hands while distributing communion.
 - Use of a common cup is not recommended. Distribute communion in separate cups spread far enough apart to allow communicants to select a cup without touching the others.
 - Communicants should remain at least 6-feet between themselves and others of different households.
- Baptism may take place with everyone wearing masks and maintaining a 6-foot distance between households. Pastor maintains a 6-foot distance except during administration of water. Follow guidelines provided by the Greater Northwest Area.
- There will be no use of the water fountain.
- Provide an option for virtual participation in the worship service.

Building Use (other than worship):

- Youth Group:
 - The maximum number of participants is 30 in a cohort group.
 - Masks are encouraged, but not required for fully vaccinated people. Unvaccinated adults are encouraged to wear a mask.
 - A minimum of 6 feet of distance in all directions between household groups.
 - Hymnals and bibles may not be used. Provide handouts in a one-time use format.
 - Live singing may take place if meeting is held outdoors with 6-foot distancing.
 - Physical contact between members of the different households is discouraged.
 - Keep accurate daily logs for each cohort. These logs must be maintained for a minimum of four weeks after the end of the program
 - See Fellowship section for food expectations.
 - There will be no use of the water fountain.
 - Available bathrooms will be the ones off of the Garden Room.
 - Provide an option for virtual participation in the meeting.
- Children:
 - Children's classes or other programs that may be considered child care must follow the child care guidance and be approved to operate as Emergency Child Care.
 - There is no gathering of children for Sunday School or childcare at this time until updates are available.
- Mission Trips:
 - These are not allowed at this time.
- Other User Groups:
 - The maximum number of participants is .75 X Maximum Occupancy of meeting space
 - It is recommended that there be a minimum of 6 feet of distance in all directions between household groups.
 - Masks is encouraged, but not required for fully vaccinated people. Unvaccinated adults are encouraged to wear a mask.
 - It is recommended that doors and windows be opened during the meeting to allow for better ventilation when possible.
 - There can be no live singing indoors, but live singing may occur outdoors with participants maintaining a 6-foot distance between household groups.
 - Physical contact between members of the different households is discouraged.
 - No shared materials should be used. Provide handouts in a one-time use format.
 - Prepackaged food may be offered.
 - There will be no use of the water fountain.
 - Available bathrooms will be the ones off of the Garden Room if the meetings are inside the church building or the ones at the north end of the Education Wing if the meetings are in the Education Wing.
 - User groups must clean and sanitize the space and equipment used within the meeting space following the guidelines provided by the FGUMC.
 - Provide an option for virtual participation in the meeting.

Forest Grove Montessori School:

- Forest Grove Montessori
 - It will be expected to meet the guidelines outlined in the Ready Schools Safe Learners 2020-21 Guidance document found at: <https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and->

[family/healthsafety/Documents/Ready%20Schools%20Safe%20Learners%202020-21%20Guidance.pdf](https://oregonearlylearning.com/oregons-governor-extends-emergency-child-care-order-with-stay-home-save-lives-order/).

- It will be expected to meet the guidelines outlined in the Oregon Governor's Emergency Child Care order as described at the following link:
<https://oregonearlylearning.com/oregons-governor-extends-emergency-child-care-order-with-stay-home-save-lives-order/>.
- The administrator of the school will sign a liability waiver that releases Forest Grove United Methodist Church, the district and conference from liability due to COVID-19.
- The school will prepare and share with the parents of the students a handbook describing the health, safety and cleaning protocols for students and staff relating to COVID-19. This document can be shared with the District Superintendent if requested.
- Require that the classes consist of "cohort pods" of no more than 10 students.
- Require that the teacher/leader of each cohort wear a face mask or face shield.
- Require that the cohort pod numbers allow for at least 35 square feet of space for each child to allow for appropriate social distancing.
- The leader of the Montessori school will meet with a member or members of the Reopening Task Force to ensure that the guidelines established by FGUMC and the District are met. This meeting will be held virtually, if possible.
- Require that the school establish a drop-off and pickup plan for the students, and require that the plan be shared with the church office to minimize risk of crossover between church office staff and Montessori school staff and students.
- The maximum number of individuals in the Education Wing during the hours that the Montessori School is in session is 50.
 - Since the Montessori school is an emergency child care center as determined by the state of Oregon, it can exceed the maximum occupancy when students are in school.
 - As a means of eliminating contact between Montessori and church staff/members the following entrance rules will be in force. See the attached signage that will be posted on the building.
 - Entrance to the church will be made through the east entry that is facing Cedar Street.
 - Entrance through the gate by the kitchen will be limited to Forest Grove Montessori School staff, parents and students between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm Monday through Friday.

Tasks to be completed:

- Identify ushers to assist in seating congregants for worship and to pass out materials.
- Identify setup and take down team for worship.
- Discuss flowers for worship and use of candles on altar.
- Formalize layout of courtyard for outdoor worship.
- Place arrows in breezeway to show direction of travel.
- Have both bathrooms in the Garden Room available for worship and indoor building use. Designate by gender or make unisex?
- Update user group information with a new communication about changes.
- Generate a letter to members and visitors of the Forest Grove United Methodist Church.