



BUMC Regathering Plan Update

April 14, 2021

In-Sanctuary Worship available beginning April 18 with Reservations!

Moving to Next Phase of In-Person Ministries

Thank you for your patience! Our Leadership Team has been hard at work and is now ready to move our congregation to the next phase of restoring in-person ministries. Please see below for instructions on how to make your reservations for Sunday worship in the sanctuary **beginning April 18, 2021**.

Things continue to change quickly on the COVID front, with much good news and also some reason for continued caution. Good news includes: The rapid pace at which the vaccines are being made available, while those that have been vaccinated represent the most vulnerable among us; those who are getting sick are less likely to die; and our live-stream system is operational and continues to be improved, meaning that most of those unable to worship in person can do so online or via our DVD ministry.

Reasons for caution include: Concerns over long-term side effects of the virus; the prevalence of more contagious variants of the virus; and a recent surge of infections that appears to be driven by younger (unvaccinated) people and spring break. If you fall within one of the categories that elevates your risk of more serious complications from the virus, and you have not yet been vaccinated, you're encouraged to continue to worship with us online.

In-Sanctuary Worship

Beginning **April 18, 2021**, here's what you can expect (and what's expected of you) when you come for in-sanctuary worship:

- A single worship service at 9am that incorporates a variety of music, with additional service times offered as demand indicates.
- Reservations for worship will be required due to state-mandated physical distancing requirements. You can make reservations using the church online database (Breeze) or by calling Michelle in the church office, who will register online for you. Please don't leave a message to register- Michelle will need to help you to ensure there is space available. **To make your reservations on Breeze**, use the link that will be included in each Friday edition of the BUMC Weekly Connection. Registration for each Sunday will open on Tuesdays at 9am and will close each Friday at 1pm. Michelle is also available to help you register your free Breeze account.
- Masks will be required to attend in-sanctuary worship for ages 5+ and encouraged for ages 2-5. If you are not able to wear a mask for medical reasons, you're asked to either wear a face shield or continue to worship with us online for now.
- Please arrive at church no more than **15 minutes prior** to the beginning of worship.

- When you arrive, you'll be asked to go directly to the sanctuary for worship, sitting with your group at least six feet from others. Being vaccinated and/or having had COVID is not a free pass to skip the mask and physical distancing.
- Please refrain from bringing food or drink with you into the sanctuary as this makes it impossible to remain masked.
- Sanctuary doors will remain open with fans running to maximize ventilation.
- When additional services are added, hard surfaces will be sanitized between services and alternate pews used for services held on the same day.
- Praise music will initially be limited to two or three live singers and prerecorded instrumentation until such time as some technical issues are resolved with adding the instrumentation to the live-stream audio.
- You **will be** permitted to sing (with your masks on).
- You may continue to make your offerings online or in the mail, or simply drop your offering in the basket on your way in or out of the sanctuary.
- We will continue to enjoy the Early Word, but kids will be asked to remain where they are seated for now.
- Baptisms can resume, with special accommodations for physical distancing.
- On Communion Sundays, please pick up one of the prepackaged communion cups from the table in the lobby (gluten-free cups will be available)
- Ushers will dismiss you at the end of the service, back-to-front. Please exit the building at that time rather than congregating in the lobby.
- Please be respectful of the varied sensibilities we all have regarding COVID precautions and maintain your mask-wearing and physical distancing while at church.
- Please let the church office know if you or a member of your group has suspected or diagnosed COVID within two weeks of your visit so that we may attempt to do the necessary contact tracing. Your name will not be shared, only the news of possible exposure.

Sunday Fellowship Time

The Sunday fellowship gathering will remain online for now, but in order to accommodate those attending in-sanctuary worship, the Zoom gathering **will move to a new time of 10:30 am.**

Nursery and Sunday School

The nursery will remain closed for now and Sunday School will remain online through the end of the school year. In order to accommodate parents attending in-sanctuary worship, some Sunday School times will change: **Pre-1st and 7th & 8th grade will move to a new time (11:00 am), 2nd-6th grade will remain at 10:30 am.**

Wednesday Night Youth Ministries

Confirmation and Senior High classes **will remain online** through the end of the school year in light of the growing number of classroom quarantines being reported in this age group.

Weddings and funerals

In-sanctuary weddings and funerals may now resume, but with the same guidelines in place for in-sanctuary worship, including the need for masks, physical distancing, reservations, and a prohibition on serving food and drink.

Ministry and Administrative Meetings

Some internal ministry groups may elect to meet in person at the church, but consideration should be given to those members who are not yet ready to meet in person.

Outside Groups

Requests for building use by outside groups will be handled on a by-case basis for now, but such use will likely follow the same guidelines in place for in-sanctuary worship.

Staff

Staff will be working in a hybrid situation, with some work from home continuing as well as more hours spent in the church offices. Work that can continue to be done equally well online will proceed in that way. If you'd like to meet with a staff person, it's always best to call or email ahead rather than assume they are in the church office.

Summary

As much as we all want things to be "normal" again, it's looking like we'll be continuing to adjust over the year ahead as the conditions surrounding the pandemic change. Summer weather will most likely allow for more outside fellowship time, and we'll continue to learn and adapt as we try new versions of "normal." Thanks for being flexible and doing your part to walk the Jesus way of love.

Peace,

Pastor Bill for the Leadership Team