



Reimagining Life Together Guidelines for Reopening

The past several months have certainly been challenging in many aspects as we have learned not only to live differently, but also to worship differently. It has been difficult in these days apart as we have longed to be together in sacred community to pray, to sing, to worship, and to fellowship together. I am thankful for the technology which has been able to keep us connected in some form as we have gathered remotely to worship each Sunday.

As we look toward re-opening for in-person worship in the future, Bishop Stanovsky has asked each church to prepare a plan for each phase of re-opening. A Reimagining Life Together Team was developed to consider state and community guidelines as well as guidelines set forth by The Greater Northwest Area of The United Methodist Church. This plan has been given careful thought and prayer specific to the context of Foothills United Methodist Church.

Phase 1

Phase 1 began on March 13, 2020 when Bishop Stanovsky suspended in-person worship and other gatherings for local churches and ministry settings. This suspension is in effect through June 15, 2020 and may be extended. A group of 5 or less is permitted to gather in the building to record or produce online worship resources, while practicing physical distancing, wearing face masks, and observing other hygiene practices. Each person may remove their face mask while they are speaking during active recording. Consistent with emerging research (<https://www.wichurches.org/2020/05/08/church-music-covid19>), the production of in-person vocal music is prohibited in facilities. High-touch surfaces must be sanitized after each use. Facilities are closed except for “essential services”. Ministries are strongly encouraged to continue or expand creative ways of meeting, serving, and worshipping together, striving to include vulnerable persons making healthy choices to participate in virtual ways. (Reimagining Life Together, The Greater Northwest Area of The United Methodist Church, May 20, 2020, p. 5)

Foothills UMC Guidelines for Phase 1:

- A Reimagining Life Together Team will serve to develop guidelines and give direction for each phase of re-opening. The team consists of: Pastor, Jeannette Hays, Julie Lowery, Val Randall, and Steve Shamblin.
- Updates and information regarding the Phases of re-opening will be communicated to the church membership through email, the Foothill's Facebook page, and website. This will continue throughout all phases of re-opening.
- Finn Hall will be closed indefinitely to any group under supervision by Foothills United Methodist Church. This will include Our Redeemer Lutheran Church who currently sub-leases Finn Hall from Foothills UMC.
 - Exceptions to building usage will be:
 - ✓ Those recording the worship service on Sunday mornings. (No more than 5 persons)
 - ✓ Those picking up checks for deposit or bills to be paid.
 - ✓ Custodial service

**All surfaces used must be wiped down by these groups after use.*

- All committee meetings, Bible Studies, etc... will be held via Google Meet or Zoom.
- Worship will be live-streamed through Facebook Live only.
- Only persons directly involved in the worship service (5 or less) may be in the building during recording. This would include the pastor, pianist, liturgist and videographer.
 - All persons must practice safe distancing observing the 6 feet apart rule.
 - All persons must wear face masks unless speaking in the service.
 - No in-person singing will be permitted inside the building.
 - All surfaces (pulpit, piano, microphones, door knobs, restrooms) must be wiped down with disinfectant wipes **AFTER** each service and use of building. During Phase 1 this is done by the Pastor.
- Only one person will be permitted in the restrooms at a time.
- No weddings, funerals, or other ceremonies may be held in Finn Hall.
- Community outreach ministries, such as Prairie Ridge Monthly dinners, may continue as long as safety guidelines (masks, gloves, social distancing) are adhered to.
- Since Foothills UMC outsources its custodial services, expectations of weekly disinfecting and cleaning requirements will be communicated by a member of the Reimagining Life Together Team and a member of Foothills UMC Trustees to ensure new guidelines are understood. Training on proper disinfecting protocol will be provided. The Trustees, Pastor and a member of the Reimagining Life Together Team will be monitoring to ensure proper cleaning and disinfecting procedures are adhered to as recommended by state and local guidelines. This will continue throughout all phases of re-opening and beyond.

Phase 2

In Phase 2 in-person worship suspension continues. It allows a group of 10 or fewer to gather in the building to record or produce online worship resources, while practicing physical distancing, wearing face masks, and observing other hygiene practices. Each person may remove their face mask while they are speaking during active recording. The production of in-person vocal music remains prohibited in facilities. High-touch surfaces must be sanitized after each use.¹ Access to Church buildings is limited to designated staff, volunteers, meetings, and services. Ministries are strongly encouraged to continue to meet, serve, and worship together, remotely, striving to include vulnerable persons making healthy choices to participate in virtual ways. (Reimagining Life Together, The Greater Northwest Area of The United Methodist Church, May 20, 2020, p. 5) ¹Note: This has since been amended to include SOLO in-person singing for recording of online services. (Bishop's COVID-19 Notice #7, June 16, 2020).

Foothills UMC Guidelines for Phase 2:

- Finn Hall will continue to be closed to any group under supervision by Foothills United Methodist Church which involves more than 10 persons.
- As we enter Phase 2, voluntary contact tracing/tracking will be implemented for all persons who enter the building at any time (meetings, worship, etc.). This enables us, for example, to identify or provide to health authorities those who may have been present should someone test positive for Covid-19. This is strictly volunteer. The manner in which this will be implemented is yet to be determined.
- ***If possible***, committee meetings, small groups, even with groups of 10 or less, should continue to meet via Google Meet or Zoom if at all possible.
- When necessary, the following committee meetings, Bible Studies, may meet inside Finn Hall: Leadership Team (2nd Tuesday of each month), Worship Committee (3rd Tuesday of each month), When meeting in the building only 10 persons or less will be permitted to meet providing the following criteria are met:
 - All persons must practice safe distancing observing the 6 feet apart rule.
 - All persons must wear face masks.
 - Only one person will be permitted in the restrooms at a time unless an individual needs assistance by a caregiver or family member.
 - All surfaces of contact (i.e., tables, chairs, door knobs, and restrooms if used) must be wiped down with disinfectant wipes **AFTER** each service.
 - No food or drinks may be brought in to be shared. This includes making coffee. You may bring in your own individual drink container, water bottle, etc.
 - Those who are considered "At Risk" are strongly encouraged to continue "Stay at Home" practices. However, "respecting the right of adults to choose the level of risk they will accept, no adult may be excluded from church activities due to age

or health conditions that may make them vulnerable to the disease." (Bishop's COVID-19 Notice #7, June 16, 2020).

- A notice will be placed at all entrances of Finn Hall alerting individuals that entering the building and participating in church functions may expose them to COVID-19. Safety Guidelines will also be posted for those entering the building. An email will also be sent to ALL church members alerting them of any potential risks. Once aware, they will not be excluded solely for their protection.
- Any committee meetings, Bible Studies, etc., with more than 10 persons will continue to be held utilizing Google Meet or Zoom.
- Worship will continue to be live-streamed through Facebook Live.
- Only persons directly involved in the worship service (10 or less) may be in the building during recording. This would include the pastor, pianist, liturgist and videographer.
 - All persons must practice safe distancing observing the 6 feet apart rule.
 - All persons must wear face masks unless speaking in the service.
 - In Phase 2, there is still no in-person singing permitted inside the building.
 - Pre-recording of *solo* singing will be permitted inside the building. However, no one else may be in the building unless those persons are from the same household.
 - Only one person will be permitted in the restrooms at a time unless an individual needs assistance by a caregiver or family member.
 - All surfaces (pulpit, piano, microphones, door knobs, restrooms) must be wiped down with disinfectant wipes **BEFORE** and **AFTER** each service. Microphone heads will be disinfected using a microphone disinfecting spray after each use.
- **Drive-In Worship** (*may be practiced in Phase 2 after Re-opening plan is approved*)
 - Drive-in Worship will begin with a trial period, meeting 1 Sunday per month (*schedule yet to be determined*).
 - As with recording the Facebook Live Worship, only those leading in worship (Pastor, Pianist, Liturgist, Videographer) may be outside of their vehicles.
 - All vehicles will park in every other parking space ***facing toward the building***. There will be a parking lot attendant to direct cars where to park.
 - All persons **MUST** remain in their vehicles at all times.
 - Windows may be down during worship.
 - There will be no in person singing or passing of the peace. We encourage tithes and offerings to continue to be mailed or made online via the church website. Should someone bring their offering with them, a basket will be brought to the car by someone leading worship for the offering to be placed in.
 - If worship is scheduled on a communion Sunday, individuals must provide their own communion elements.
 - There will be **NO** access to Finn Hall.

- The Reimagining Life Together Team in consultation with the Leadership Team will evaluate the success of the Drive-In Worship and make recommendations for its continuance.
- **Outdoor Worship** (*may be practiced in Phase 2 after Re-opening plan is approved*)
 - If the Drive-in Worship proves to be successful in following the Guidelines, Outdoor Worship will be considered with a trial period.
 - Individuals **must bring their own chairs**. All chairs (with the exception of immediate families living in the same household) must be at least 6 feet apart. Areas will be marked off to indicate where persons may sit. If an individual does forget to bring a chair, a metal folding chair will be provided (the chair must be wiped down with disinfectant wipes after use).
 - Face masks must be worn.
 - Social Distancing **MUST** be observed for continuation of Outdoor Worship.
 - If worship is scheduled on a communion Sunday, individuals must provide their own communion elements.
 - There will be no in person singing or passing of the peace.
 - We encourage tithes and offerings to continue to be mailed or made online via the church website. Should someone bring their offering with them, a basket will be brought to the car by someone leading worship for the offering to be placed in.
 - There will be **NO** access to Finn Hall. If a situation should necessitate someone entering Finn Hall, that area of the building must be wiped down and disinfected.
 - The Reimagining Life Together Team in consultation with the Leadership Team will evaluate the success of the Outdoor Worship and make recommendations for its continuance.
- No weddings, funerals, or other ceremonies may be held in Finn Hall during Phase 2.
- Community outreach ministries, such as Prairie Ridge Monthly dinners, may continue as long as safety guidelines (masks, gloves, social distancing) are adhered to.

Phase 3

Phase 3 allows for in-person worship, weddings, and funerals for up to 50 people while wearing face masks, utilizing proper sanitizing, and maintaining physical distancing. No communion, live singing, or food service is allowed, and high-risk populations must continue to worship from home.² Outside of worship, access to Church buildings is limited to designated staff, volunteers, meetings, and services. Fellowship and education activities for adults, children and youth must remain virtual, and in-person vacation bible school and mission trips remain cancelled.

(Reimagining Life Together, The Greater Northwest Area of The United Methodist Church, May

20, 2020, p. 5) ²Note: This has since been amended to state that "vulnerable adults and persons with underlying health conditions are discouraged from gathering with others in church facilities or for church activities. However, respecting the right of adults to choose the level of risk they will accept, no adult may be excluded from church activities due to age or health conditions that may make them vulnerable to the disease. Churches should have a process in place to make individuals aware that entering the building and participating in church functions may expose them to COVID-19. Once aware, they should not be excluded solely for their protection." (Bishop's COVID-19 Notice #7, June 16, 2020).

Foothills UMC Guidelines for Phase 3:

- In-person worship resumes at Finn Hall for up to 50 persons.
 - Those who are considered "At Risk" are strongly encouraged to continue "Stay at Home" practices. However, "respecting the right of adults to choose the level of risk they will accept, no adult may be excluded from church activities due to age or health conditions that may make them vulnerable to the disease." (Bishop's COVID-19 Notice #7, June 16, 2020).
 - All entrances to the building will have posted Safety Guidelines which must be followed.
 - Prior to resuming in-person worship all hymnals, pew Bibles, and pens will be removed from the pews.
 - All surfaces of contact (i.e., tables, chairs, door knobs, restrooms if used) must be wiped down with disinfectant wipes **BEFORE** and **AFTER** each service. Our goal is to have volunteers rotate weeks in the disinfecting. This is yet to be determined.
 - No food or drinks may be brought in to be shared. This includes making coffee. Individuals may bring in their own individual drink container, water bottle, etc. This includes the suspension of potluck dinners indefinitely.
 - Pews/chairs will be marked off to insure safe distancing.
 - There will be a Door Person at the entrance to open the door for everyone who enters.
 - The entry area to Finn Hall will be partitioned off prior to entering the worship area.
 - Masks **MUST** be worn. (*Masks will be made available to those who do not have one*). *Worship leaders may remove masks when speaking.
 - As persons enter, a temperature check will be taken. If an individual is running a fever or exhibiting signs of illness, they will not be permitted to remain in the building.
 - A Central Hand sanitizing station will be made available as persons enter the building before entering into the partitioned worship space. People will be encouraged to carry travel size sanitizer with them as well.
 - Only one person will be permitted in the restrooms at a time unless an individual needs assistance by a caregiver or family member.

- Bulletins will either be handed out by one person *or* placed directly on the seat. (*Individuals are asked to take their bulletins home with them to dispose of them.*)
 - Live singing is not permitted in the building.
 - Passing of the Peace of Christ will be announced by the Liturgist with a simple response from the congregation. There will be no shaking of hands, hugs, or moving around the worship space.
 - Offering: There will be a basket for individuals to leave their offering as they enter the worship space. An usher (utilizing PPE) will then bring the basket forward and place on the altar during the offering time.
 - In this phase there will be no after service fellowship/coffee time. No shared foods may be brought into the building. Individuals may bring in their own individual drink container, water bottle, etc.
 - There will be no Sunday School at this time.
 - In this phase there is no in-person communion. *If* this changes:
 - Individuals must bring their own communion elements, *or*
 - Pre-packaged/Self-contained/pre-filled communion cups will used.
- Worship services will continue to be streamed via Facebook Live.
 - Funerals/Weddings may take place with up to 50 persons. (*The same Safety Guidelines as for in-person worship will apply*).
 - Community outreach ministries, such as Prairie Ridge Monthly dinners, may continue as long as safety guidelines (masks, gloves, social distancing) are adhered to.
 - During this phase, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church may resume in-person worship as well. However, they **MUST** adhere to the same re-opening protocol as Foothills UMC. At this time, that time frame is unknown. This will be communicated by the Pastor.
 - During this phase, AA may resume meeting in the Annex, adhering to our safety and cleaning guidelines. This means they may not make coffee or bring in food, only their own individual drink containers. The Chairperson of Trustees will be communicating with and overseeing AA.

ITEMS TO PURCHASE/STOCK PRIOR TO PHASE 3 RE-OPENING

- New/improved waste receptacle
- No Touch Forehead Thermometer
- Disposable Masks
- Disposable Gloves
- Hand Sanitizer
- Disinfectant Wipes
- Approved Disinfectant/Cleanser

Phase 4

Phase 4 returns to more “regular” worship and other gatherings with no size limit. High risk populations are invited to join at their discretion, but churches are strongly encouraged to continue reimagined ways of sharing space, providing meaningful opportunities to participate in the life of the church virtually. With increased hygiene practices communion may be shared and limited “coffee hour” or “fellowship time” may resume. Live singing is still not permitted. Access to church buildings is open, while maintaining appropriate safety practices.
(Reimagining Life Together, The Greater Northwest Area of The United Methodist Church, May 20, 2020, p. 6)

Foothills UMC Guidelines for Phase 4:

- In-person worship at Finn Hall may resume with no size limit.
 - *"Respecting the right of adults to choose the level of risk they will accept, no adult may be excluded from church activities due to age or health conditions that may make them vulnerable to the disease."* (Bishop's COVID-19 Notice #7, June 16, 2020). Those who are considered *"At Risk"* are encouraged to use their own discretion in attending worship, understanding any possible risks.
 - All entrances to the building will continue to have posted Safety Guidelines which must continue be followed.
 - Hymnals, pew Bibles, and pens will be returned to the pews.
 - All surfaces of contact (i.e., tables, chairs, door knobs, restrooms if used) must be wiped down with disinfectant wipes **BEFORE** and **AFTER** each service.
 - Pews/chairs will continue to be marked off or spaced to insure safe distancing.
 - There will be a Door Person at the entrance to open the door for everyone who enters.
 - Masks **will be encouraged** to be worn. (*Masks will be made available to those who do not have one*). **Worship leaders may remove masks when speaking.*
 - Hand sanitizing stations will be made available.
 - Only one person will be permitted in the restrooms at a time unless an individual needs assistance by a caregiver or family member.
 - Bulletins will either be handed out by one person or placed directly on the seat. (*Individuals are asked to take their bulletins home with them to dispose of them.*)
 - Live singing is still not permitted.
 - Passing of the Peace of Christ will be announced by the Liturgist with a simple response from the congregation. There will be no shaking of hands, hugs, or moving around the worship space.

- Offering: There will be a basket for individuals to leave their offering as they enter the worship space. An usher (utilizing PPE) will then bring the basket forward and place on the altar during the offering time.
- In this phase, a limited after-service fellowship/coffee time.
- Sunday School may resume.
- In this phase, in-person communion will resume.
Communion will be served in 2 possible manners:
 - Individuals must bring their own communion elements, *or*
 - Pre-packaged/Self-contained/pre-filled communion cups will used.

- Worship services will continue to be streamed via Facebook Live.
- Funerals/Weddings may take place with unlimited capacity. (*The same Safety Guidelines as for in-person worship will apply*).
- Community outreach ministries, such as Prairie Ridge Monthly dinners, may continue as long as state and local guidelines are observed.

Beyond Phase 4

This is a “new normal” that is yet to be determined. This will include monitoring health indicators and guidance from government and health professionals. It will be important to establish new routines that are more protective of public health and to take forward with us new practices that will make us more resilient if a similar challenge were to (re)emerge. Additional guidance will be provided in the future. (Reimagining Life Together, The Greater Northwest Area of The United Methodist Church, May 20, 2020, p. 6)

Submitted by Reimagining Life Together Team:

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Approved unanimously by Foothills United Methodist Church Leadership Team: June 29, 2020

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