

SILVER SPRING UNITED METHODIST CHURCH GUIDELINES FOR INDOOR IN-PERSON GATHERINGS

SSUMC's Re-Entry Task Force has been charged with looking at ways to bring members of the SSUMC faith community back together in a safe manner during the COVID-19 pandemic. While we have been able to successfully worship online virtually, there are additional challenges and considerations that must be addressed for our transition into Indoor In-Person Worship.

As we begin this transition, we will have one indoor worship service in the main Sanctuary each week at 11:00 a.m. We will also continue to live stream as well at 9:00 a.m. as we understand that some members of our church family may not yet be ready for in-person gathering.

After reviewing much information, The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and work done by other churches that are holding indoor services, the Re-Entry Task Force determined that a tailored set of protocols was required. This document provides essential guidelines and practices necessary for our transition to an Indoor In-Person worship experience that is SAFE, COMFORTABLE, and meaningful for all participants. These requirements will remain in place until further notice. While these guidelines may appear to be overwhelming, please give them careful attention as they are intended to provide our members and community a SAFE place to worship.

GUIDELINES FOR INDOOR IN-PERSON GATHERINGS

Masks MUST be worn at all times.

We are excited to welcome you back in person! We know that each family has developed their own guidelines for their family based on their needs. While on church property, we appreciate everyone's cooperation following these guidelines to keep our church community safe and our facility clean. Please know that these guidelines may be stricter than mandated and we thank you for cooperating. Our PRIORITY is your health!

MASK REQUIREMENT

- 1. Masks are required and MUST be properly worn when inside the church building, covering your nose and mouth, at all times for everyone above the age of 2 while on church property while not actively eating or drinking**
2. Masks are available from ushers or greeters for those that need one or forget to bring one with them.

HEALTH PROCEDURES

While we would love to have you worship with us in-person, we invite you to join our virtual worship service at 9:00 a.m. on Zoom or Facebook Live instead if any of the following pertain to you:

1. You are an at-risk individual.
2. If you are experiencing symptoms of illness.
3. If any of the following situations apply to you, or someone you live with, within the last 10 days; experience flu like systems such as a fever, cough, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, congestion, runny nose or loss of taste or smell.
4. We strongly encourage members to download the MD COVID Alert App. **MD COVID Alert** is a fundamental part of contact tracing and Maryland's effort to help slow the spread of COVID-19. You can download the app at <https://covidlink.maryland.gov/content/mdcovidalert/>

PHYSICAL SPACE

1. Please observe physical distancing of 6 feet from all that do not live in your home.
2. Physical distancing must be observed in the hallways and common spaces as gathering is not permitted.
3. Children 5th grade and younger need to be accompanied by an adult to ensure physical distancing.
4. Please respect people's desire not to shake hands or to be hugged and refrain from physical contact. Air hugs are great!!!
5. Please depart the building and socialize outdoors on the Portico (the covered outside area to the main entrance from the parking lot) or in the Georgia Ave. courtyard or lawn.
6. Doors will be propped open when possible.

SANITIZATION

1. Hand sanitizing stations are available throughout the building. We encourage all who enter the building to use them.
2. The building, including high contact surfaces and bathrooms, are professionally cleaned after use to ensure safety among all users.

WORSHIP

1. Upon arrival to the church, a welcome table will be located under the portico. You will be asked to sign-in with your name and phone number for contact tracing as you arrive for worship.
2. At the welcome desk you will have the opportunity to write a prayer concern or a joy that you will be given to the Pastor prior to the start of service.
3. Paper bulletins will be distributed by the Greeter.
4. Please select a pew that allows for 6 feet of social distancing between family units.
5. The Pastor(s) and worship leaders will wear masks and may remove their masks during the service behind the additional protective plexiglass shields.
6. We are excited that our music ministries will provide music during the worship service. In order to continue protecting one another, we will not be singing as a congregation at this time. Please enjoy the musical gifts of our choir and praise band and use it as a chance to reflect on the music and lyrics. *You are invited to stand in body or spirit as directed by worship leaders.*
7. Instead of offering plates, there will be a drop box for offerings in the Narthex. You may drop your offering in the box on your way into or out of the Sanctuary.
8. During the offertory, we also invite you to make an offering online if you so choose, or to reflect on the spirituality of generosity as you listen to our offertory music.
9. After the postlude, our Ushers will be dismissing you from the Sanctuary in an orderly fashion to avoid traffic jams and maintain physical distancing. As you are dismissed, please move quickly to the Portico where our Pastor(s) will be waiting to greet you! (Please respect people's desire not to shake hands or to be hugged).
10. If in the event in-person worship services are cancelled due to COVID, communication will be sent at least 48 hours prior to Sunday worship.

COMMUNION

1. We will celebrate Communion on the first Sunday of each month.
2. As you arrive, a Greeter or Usher will hand you a small, self-contained packet with a wafer and grape juice.
3. We will receive the sacrament in our pews rather than coming forward to the altar rail to kneel.
4. The Pastor will announce when to remove masks for communion. After communion, masks **MUST** be put back on.

RESTROOM USE

1. The restrooms are available and are to be used by one person (or family) at a time.
2. Please wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before you depart the restroom.
3. Hand sanitizer is also available outside the restroom.

AMENITIES

1. The water fountains are not available at this time.
2. Sunday morning fellowship will be offered outside in the portico and in the Georgia Ave. courtyard after service, barring inclement weather.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

1. Infant & Toddler Care will not be provided at this time.
2. Children Pre-K – 5th Grade will have access to outside worship and gatherings (unless in cases of inclement weather). All children's ministries volunteers will be required to be vaccinated. More information regarding Children's Ministry will be provided shortly.

3. We will provide a virtual children's ministry option for those uncomfortable with participating in person.
4. **Masks are required and MUST be properly worn when inside the church building, covering your nose and mouth, at all times for everyone above the age of 2 while on church property except when actively eating or drinking.**

YOUTH MINISTRY

1. Youth Ministries will have access to outside gatherings (except in cases of inclement weather). All Youth volunteers will be required to be vaccinated. More information regarding Youth Ministry will be provided shortly.
2. We will provide a virtual youth ministry option for those uncomfortable with participating in person.
3. **Masks are required and MUST be properly worn when inside the church building, covering your nose and mouth, at all times for everyone above the age of 2 while on church property except when actively eating or drinking.**

ADULT SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

1. Adult Small Group Ministries can take place inside or outside in accordance with mask and social distancing requirements. All small group should contact ssumcadmin@silverspringumcp.org to schedule your group on the calendar.
2. We will provide virtual small group ministry options for those uncomfortable with participating in person.
4. **Masks are required and MUST be properly worn when inside the church building, covering your nose and mouth, at all times for everyone above the age of 2 while on church property while not actively eating or drinking.**

Again, we are excited to welcome you back, and we thank you for your cooperation following these guidelines to keep our church community safe and welcoming to all!