

Protocols for In-Person Gatherings Decatur & Concord United Methodist Churches Recommended: 5/23/2021

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 and 2021, the churches of Decatur and Concord United Methodist take seriously to dual calling to do no harm and share the life changing love of Jesus. Our Pandemic Protocol Team continues to follow the guidance of the CDC, the State of Tennessee, and the Holston Annual Conference.

The CDC guidance that: "Fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal or territorial laws, rules and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance," provides new guidance to our protocols. These recommendations supersede all previous recommendations.

In analyzing the spread of COVID-19 and the safety of in-person gatherings, these tools and resources will be used as a guide.

1. COVID Risk Level Map developed by the Harvard Global Health Institute | This tool is used by the Holston Conference to measure the level of community spread in each county.
<https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>
2. Tennessee Department of Health County Data Snapshot.
<https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov/data/county-data-snapshot.html>
3. "When You've Been Fully Vaccinated: How to Protect Yourself and Others," CDC,
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>
4. "Choosing Safer Activities," CDC, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/participate-in-activities.html>

Guidelines for Gatherings

1. Mask Protocols
 - a. As an act of love for those not yet eligible to be vaccinated and in keeping with CDC recommendations, unvaccinated people will wear a face covering upon entering the church facility. All are encouraged to wear a mask, so no one feels singled out for their vaccination status.
 - b. If our county's 7-day running average of new daily COVID-19 cases is 4 or above (approx. 33 per 100,000) everyone is requested to wear a facemask.
 - c. When all age groups are eligible to receive a vaccine, mask guidance will be suspended after an appropriate waiting period to allow for vaccines to occur (approx. 6 weeks).
2. Basic Protocols
 - a. People who are symptomatic, have a fever, or unvaccinated who have been exposed to the virus are to refrain from attending in-person worship for 14 days or until they receive a negative COVID test.
 - b. Social distancing of 6 feet will be encouraged.
 - c. If our county's 7-day running average of new daily COVID-19 cases is 8 or above (approx. 66 per 100,000), indoor worship will be suspended for following the Sunday. All governmental safety directives or recommendations regarding worship and gatherings will be followed.
3. Facility Protocols
 - a. Clear signage detailing these protocols and guidance will be displayed around the church.
 - b. Hand sanitizer will be available at multiple locations throughout the building.
 - c. The doors of restrooms will remain propped open if privacy allows.
 - d. The trustees will ensure adequate ventilation.
4. Touch surfaces will be minimized, and a stationary generosity box will be available for people to make their in-person donations.
5. A choir and/or ensembles can resume, unmasked, if all are vaccinated. Unvaccinated individuals should wear a mask while singing.
6. Any instrument that requires breath to produce sound may be used by a vaccinated person.
7. All church groups may meet in scheduled rooms provided they follow protocols.
8. Additional groups may use the facility if they receive approval from the pastor after consulting with the church council.
9. Food Service
 - a. If food is to be offered, it should be consumed outside.
 - b. During food service, all food staff will be properly masked.
 - c. Food will not be served in a self-served buffet. All food will be served by staff. During the serving of food, all will be asked to be properly masked. Hand sanitizer will be freely available.
10. Exposure:
 - a. If there is a known exposure of COVID-19 during worship, in-person church worship services will be suspended for 14 day.

Additional of Guidelines

St. Mary's Legacy Clinic

St. Mary's Legacy Clinic will continue to operate following their COVID procedures.

Weddings and Funerals

All weddings and funerals must follow the protocols established for in-person gatherings.