

## **Indoor, In-Person Worship Proposal for Winter 2020**

We have been able to offer in-person activities since July, but they have all been outside. As the weather changes, we are considering indoor options that allow us to continue offering an in-person service. Our survey has made it clear that a large part of our congregation would like to try indoor, in-person worship and another large part would not. Therefore, we should consider our in-person, indoor options while ensuring we continue to provide a quality virtual worship option. Hopefully this plan does that.

### **Overview:**

#### *FLC Option*

Starting Sunday, November 29, the FLC will be open each Sunday for people to gather and participate in the 11 a.m. Facebook Live service that will be projected on a large screen and played through speakers. Congregants will be seated at a round table that can be shared with others in their household. Couples and individuals who are not living together can be seated at a table together opposite each other in a limited capacity. There will also be a few chairs spread out against the wall individuals can sit in. Each table will have worship supplies such as bulletins, offering envelopes, Bibles, hand sanitizer, and prepackaged communion on communion Sundays. There will also be coloring sheets, kid's lessons, playdough, and other kid friendly elements for families to utilize during the service. At least one pastor will be in the room as a worship host.

#### *Sanctuary Option*

Starting Sunday, December 27, the sanctuary will be open each Sunday for people to gather and participate in worship while it is being streamed on Facebook. The opportunity to worship in the FLC and to worship virtually will both still be available.

### **Safety Precautions:**

There will be no congregational singing while worshipping indoors. Everyone must wear masks and maintain physical distance the entire time they are in the building. Things will not be handed out or passed. Offering boxes will be provided at each door for people to utilize. Attendees will preregister to ensure the capacity of 50 for either room is not exceeded. Greeters will be stationed outside each door with a few roaming the facility. They will answer questions, ensure masks are worn, check registration, and lead people to their seats in an orderly manner. People will be dismissed by pew or table to mitigate crowding while exiting. All air units and exhaust fans will run the entire time to provide as much air exchange as possible. If anyone (including staff or volunteers) feels unwell, has come in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID, or has reasonable concern they might have contracted COVID, they will be asked to stay home. In the event that someone who attends a worship service tests positive for COVID, all volunteers, staff, and those in proximity to the person will be advised to get tested for COVID. If it appears there is community spread from within a service, all who attended will be notified and encouraged to get tested for COVID. During the week, all spaces will be cleaned and refreshed.

#### *FLC Option Specifics*

Tables will be approximately 16 feet apart, allowing excessive space between family units. Each table will be limited to either a group living together such as a family, two individuals, or a couple and individual. If the table is comprised of people not living together, they will be seated at opposite sides of the table. Doors from both parking lots will be open to help reduce lines and congestion.

### *Sanctuary Option Specifics*

Every other pew will be taped off and pews will be marked to show six feet horizontal separation. Those living together can sit together, but all others will be asked to maintain a physical distance of 6 feet in any direction. All speaking and singing will occur on the stage at least 16 feet away from any congregant. Bulletins will not be handed out but can be accessed electronically.

### **Automatic Cancellations – Very Important**

On Thursday Evening (after Thursday's updates), if Scott County is a "red" county according to the Kentucky Department of Public Health, or Scott County has cancelled school because of COVID for the rest of that week or the next week, **we will not hold indoor in-person worship services.**

### **Registration**

Registration for worship will occur via an online form or by contacting the office. People can only register for that week's service and must register by Wednesday at 5 p.m. After registration is closed, people will be contacted via email or phone to confirm that they will be able to attend. If more people try to register than capacity allows, the last to register will be put on a waiting list. If anyone attending tells us they can no longer attend, someone from the waiting list will be notified that they are now able to come. Tables in the FLC will be preassigned and marked, but pews will be open seating with physical distancing limits. Preference will be given to those who are unable to access our Facebook Live worship due to a lack of technology capabilities.

### **Answers to Some Probable Questions**

#### *Why now?*

This question is probably raised because the situation has not improved any more than it was in the spring. If anything, things are worse now. The timing of this conversation is based on weather more than the state of the pandemic. We've offered an in-person worship option since July, but can no longer do so because it was outside. Now that it is colder, we are considering options to continue offering an in-person service. Outdoors is safer, so any indoor option will have more limitations and precautions.

#### *Why can we meet in the FLC but not the sanctuary at first?*

The biggest limitation here is that currently we use several prerecorded videos in worship. During Advent this will be especially true as we will have a virtual children's program, virtual music Sunday, prerecorded wreath lightings, and Offering of Global Missions testimonial videos, along with our normal prerecorded special music, scripture reading, Children's Moment, and nature moment videos. We currently have no way for people in the sanctuary to hear or see those videos. However, after Advent, there won't be as much of a need for special prerecorded content and we can ask those in the sanctuary to provide commonly recorded elements like scripture reading, prayer, and testimonials.

#### *Why continue to offer a FLC option after the sanctuary opens?*

The hope is that after Advent these options can meet two different needs. We will be unable to provide children's church that is separate from the congregation, so it might be difficult for families to sit in the pews with their young children the entire time. The FLC option can be a more family friendly option that provides more opportunities to engage children and families both passively and actively. After Advent there is a thought that we could incorporate some more family friendly elements in the FLC service where they mute the broadcast (perhaps during hymns) and have activities, questions, or lessons for those at each table.

*Why not just open the sanctuary even though people won't be able to see the videos?*

Our goal is not just to offer a safe worship experience, but a good worship experience. Any in-person worship option must still be worship. It is not a good worship experience to have several long (sometimes up to 10 minutes) gaps. This creates a disjointed and incomplete worship service.

*Is this safe?*

Ultimately, that will be for each person to decide, but I (William) believe it is. The FLC and sanctuary are both really large rooms with a lot of air. They also both have lots of air exchange units. We are not singing so there will be less expulsion and deep breathing which both dramatically increase the risk. As long as we follow the rules by wearing masks, respecting physical distance, and practicing basic hygiene, I (not being an expert) feel comfortable with the safety of these options. However, if anyone is in the vulnerable population, especially if they have preexisting conditions that make the virus especially dangerous, they should stay home and not take the chance.

#### **Relevant Links**

[Kentucky Department of Public Health Dashboard](#)

[Kentucky guidelines for Places of Worship](#)

[Kentucky Council of Churches COVID information](#)

[CDC article about COVID transmission](#)

[An examination of the risks of singing](#)

[An article exploring congregational singing](#)

[An example of the unique danger churches pose in spreading COVID](#)

[A News-Graphic article about COVID in Scott County](#)