
Recommendations for Worshiping Safely In Person: FAQs

Westminster's Pastor and Session have struggled mightily with the question of whether and when to return to in-person worship in our beloved church building. They are confident that God is leading us to answer "yes" and "soon" to those challenges. And that He is also guiding us to proceed with caution and to take appropriate measures to protect the health and safety of His people.

Your Session has studied and is adhering to recommendations from PC(USA), Trinity Presbytery, the Presbyterian Association of Musicians, the Center for Disease Control, the U.S. Government's coronavirus.gov website, and South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. The protocols and processes you are asked to follow are grounded in the best guidance available at this time.



The answers to these Frequently Asked Questions should help you decide if in-person worship is the right choice for you at this time, and also to know what to expect if you do choose to attend on Sunday morning. If you have additional questions, don't hesitate to contact the church office: wpcgwd1@gmail.com or 864.229.3595.

Q1: When will the sanctuary be open for Sunday morning worship?

A1: On June 7th at 9:30, ***only the front breezeway door*** will be open for congregation members to enter the narthex and from there, the sanctuary. All other entrances to the church will remain locked, to ensure that everyone stays in the areas that have been disinfected and prepared for shared worship. The worship service begins at 10:00 A.M. as usual.

Q2: Will we have Sunday Study?

A2: To minimize risk from close contact, and to limit the areas that have to be disinfected, the Nurture & Christian Education Committee has determined that in-person Sunday Study is not feasible at this time. And because worship leaders and some congregation members will be busy at the sanctuary just prior to the 10:00 worship, no online Sunday Study is planned, at least through the summer.

Q3: Can we still worship online once in-person worship resumes?

A3: Absolutely! In fact, if you have any symptoms of illness, fall into a COVID-19 high-risk category, or have *any concerns at all* about being in a public group, please stay home, knowing that we love you and fully respect your decision!



Beginning June 7th, worship services will be live-streamed at 10:00 A.M. on Sundays via the Westminster website (wpcgnwd.org). You will experience the service in real time, just like the

folks who are physically present. Those broadcasts will also be saved for future viewing. So as we like to say, you can worship with Westminster whoever you are, wherever you are, whenever you can!

Q4: If I choose to worship in person, will anything be different?

A4: Some things *will* be different, as described later, but ***the most important things remain the same***: God will be there, He will be praised and glorified, and you can share the experience with others in your Westminster family, both in person as well as virtually!

While your Pastor and Session want in-person worship to feel familiar and comfortable for you, the hazards of spreading the COVID-19 virus across our population require that we do some things differently.

To give you context for these possibly odd-seeming requirements, our list of changes below includes the rationale for what you are being asked to do. If you'd like more information about state and federal guidelines, please visit the Resources page on the Westminster website for materials to download and links to other useful information sources.

Why?!?!

Here's what will be different as you arrive, and *why*:

- You need to make ***reservations*** a day or two before the service. Once you are seated, you should be *at least* six feet away from other families—in every direction. So even in our spacious sanctuary, we'll have many fewer seats available. We'll send you details on the reservation process as soon as possible.
- Plan to bring your own ***Bible***. To avoid giving the virus more places to lurk, all Bibles, hymnals, pencils, welcome pads, name tags, and papers will be removed from the pews prior to the service.
- Make sure you are wearing a ***mask*** before you get out of your car, and expect to keep it on as long as you are in the building. Wearing a mask is an outward and visible sign of your Christian concern for others. Your mask primarily protects the people you encounter from receiving any virus that you might be carrying. Because many infected people do not experience symptoms, but can still spread the virus, we have to take reasonable precautions *just in case*.
- When you arrive, expect to be greeted by ***ushers***. Their primary job is to maintain a healthy worship environment. Expect the ushers to manage the distance between family groups as you enter and exit, minimize any visiting in the narthex (sorry, *no* coffee and refreshments!), and help you find your reserved seat. You'll find your bulletin already placed there, so you can avoid touching stacks of paper that others might have touched.
- Some personal ***hygiene*** items, such as masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes, will be available on the round table in the narthex.
- Nursery care cannot be offered; however, ***families with small children*** can use special seating areas with rocking chair and activity table at the back of the sanctuary.



Here's what will be different during the worship service, and *why*:

- Instead of passing the collection plate, drop your **offering** into the basket provided at the back of the sanctuary as you come in. Passing plates can also pass viruses.
- The congregation will be able to listen to hymns sung by our volunteer vocalists; however, you will **not** be invited to **sing**. The most deadly transmission of COVID-19 virus comes from viruses riding water droplets that are expelled from the mouth during speaking, sneezing, coughing, yelling, and especially singing. And the potential for infection goes up the longer you are near those water droplets. For that reason, you are urged to read and pray the words of the hymns with a song in your heart, but not on your lips.
- During the passing of the **peace**, you are encouraged to wave, flash a 60's-style peace sign, use sign language...anything but touch each other. The same rule applies as you enter and exit the church building, and also in the parking lot. Maintain a minimum of six feet between family groups at all times.
- **Restrooms** will be available; however, only one person or family should go in at a time. Disinfectant wipes will be provided, so you can wipe clean any surface you've touched. Use that wipe to open the door, so you don't have to touch the handle. And toss the wipe into the waste basket provided.
- After the benediction and charge at the conclusion of the service, the ushers will escort out each group, **row by row**. You may *exit* by the front and courtyard doors, to reduce crowding in the narthex and breezeway.
- Once you are in the parking lot, you are encouraged to visit with each other...as long as you **remain at least six feet apart**.



Q5: What special precautions are being taken to keep the building disinfected?

A5: Ody Sholar is in charge of cleaning and disinfecting our facility. Over and above his usual high standards, the sanctuary will be fogged with a disinfecting solution at least once a week. The virus typically does not persist on hard surfaces for more than a few days. By limiting access to the church during the week, the sanctuary should be as safe as possible each Sunday morning.

Speaking of Masks...

As we approach our first post-lockdown in-person worship, you are urged to join with Beth Hammond and others in creating hand-sewn masks. Beth has volunteered to show interested parties the tricks of the trade, and also suggests a video tutorial: <https://YouTube.be/4FB--BOyTiU>. You'll also find a downloadable pattern there.



The COVID-19 Commandments

- Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God wherever you are.
- Thou shalt wear thy mask.
- Thou shalt keep thy distance from thy brothers and sisters.
- Thou shalt look, but not touch. Anybody. Anything.
- Thou shalt not loiter in the narthex or parking lot.
- Thou shalt not sing except in thine own shower.
- Thou shalt wash thy hands with all thy might.