

Welcome Home



Central Trinity
United Methodist Church

Guidelines for a Safe Return to CT – Phase 2

Moving from In-Person Worship to Other In-Person Activities

Our return to in-person worship for both services began July 12 and has seen a steady increase in attendance since then. *Thank you all* for your adherence to the guidelines put in place to make this return possible and successful.

The return to in-person worship was done in a very intentional way to minimize any danger from COVID-19. In-person worship began not because the threat of COVID-19 had disappeared, but because meeting together is a vital part of what it means to be the body of Christ. New cases of the coronavirus continue to appear. As a result, it is important that we also now return to other in-person activities in a very intentional way out of our love and concern for one another.

Updates to Previous Guidelines

Face Coverings. Since our initial guidelines, a mandatory mask/face covering requirement was put in place by the Ohio Department of Health for all persons 10 years and older who do not have physical or developmental disabilities. Since then, the state also mandated the wearing of face coverings by all children in schools. Therefore, we are requesting that all persons of school age and older attending in-person activities in the church building wear a face covering unless unable to do so because of medical conditions. Exceptions will be made for children younger than school-aged, including children who use the nursery.

Sanctuary Seating. The seating in the sanctuary has been set up to maintain physical distancing. As attendance increases, we will be making adjustments to the seating arrangements and ask for your cooperation when entering the sanctuary and finding a seat. From week to week different pews might be available for seating. Some pews will be designated for “overflow” seating and will only be open once all other seating is occupied. Please ask the ushers for assistance if you are having any problems with seating. Be encouraged to use all sanctuary exits after worship to avoid congregating in the rear of the sanctuary.

Guidelines for Returning to In-Person Gatherings

Any Central Trinity official group, committee, or ministry may begin meeting in person at the church, starting September 13 or any date the group would select after September 13. Please follow CT guidelines about face coverings, as well as physical distancing and regular washing of hands or use of sanitizer.

At this time, the use of the church facilities by outside groups or events such as baby or bridal showers, dinners, or parties is still on hold.

Adult Sunday School

Each class will determine what is best and appropriate for their class. Not all classes will resume September 13; some have opted to wait longer to resume. Class times might be adjusted because of Worship service times. Please check with your class teacher for specific information on your class.

Sunday Morning Children’s Programs

All Children’s programming will be available, starting September 13. All school-aged children must wear a face covering. Physical distancing will be observed in the classrooms. If you have any questions about Children’s activities, please contact Kifin Judson.

Bible Study

Plans for the re-start of weekly Bible studies are in process. Contact Pastor Steve for more information.

Youth

Plans for weekly youth gatherings are currently being finalized. Contact Pastor Jon for more information.

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Additional Gathering Guidelines

All persons are to wear face coverings and maintain six feet physical distance unless persons are from the same household; table and chairs should be spaced out to maintain appropriate distance.

Persons may bring their own water bottle, coffee, other beverage, or snack; however, no communal food or shared snacks are allowed. Please do not place food or beverages out on tables to share. Needless to say, no dinners or potlucks - yet.

All gatherings/meetings must be scheduled with the church office. The date, time, and location or room must be on file in the office. This is to accommodate all necessary cleaning, sanitizing, and set up.

Restrooms will be open and cleaned regularly, but not between each use. Use the restrooms at your own discretion.

If you are meeting as a CT group, but are not meeting at the church, we encourage you to use best practices and these guidelines as a means to maintain safety and care for each other.

Muskingum County COVID-19 Color Code System

Just as we use the Sheriff's road condition levels for inclement weather in the winter, Central Trinity has adopted the following guidelines that use the Muskingum County COVID-19 Color Codes.

If Muskingum County is

YELLOW or **ORANGE**—Sunday Services and all other gatherings at CT are allowed.

RED—Sunday Services continue; all other meetings/gatherings are paused until the county returns to **YELLOW** or **ORANGE** status.

PURPLE—All in-person gatherings are paused, including Sunday worship.

Staying Home – Using Technology

If you feel sick, have a temperature, or don't feel comfortable coming to church during this time, we encourage you to stay home.

We will continue to provide live-stream services at 9:00 and 10:30 each Sunday. Both services each week will also be posted to CT's website and YouTube.

Some committees or groups have used Zoom to have meetings. If any group chooses to use Zoom or meet at a different location, that is completely supported and understood by the church family and leadership.

We honor each individual's decision about their comfort level in returning to in-person worship or gatherings. During this time of pandemic there are good and faithful reasons that some of us may need to stay home to protect ourselves or to care for others.

Future Updates

One constant throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been that practices for staying safe shift and change. Expect further updates and possible adjustments to this plan as time passes and we begin living into these changes. We will do our best to keep you informed and updated through congregational mailings, postings to the CT website, and Sunday morning announcements.

Final Thoughts

These guidelines were developed by CT's Return Task Force and affirmed by Central Trinity's Administrative Council. We recognize that there are many deeply held convictions and opinions about actions by federal, state, and local authorities. The past six months have been very trying times indeed.

We offer these guidelines as our best efforts to maintain a safe environment and ask that we all please follow them out of our love and care for the entire church family.

If you have any questions or concerns after reading this letter, please feel free to contact the church office at 740-453-1210.

May God bless you and keep you and your families safe as we eagerly and joyfully look forward to coming back together at Central Trinity.