

Concord United Reopening Plan

Assumptions

We reopened for in-person worship in the fall with protocols that were in alignment with the annual conference. Those protocols were highlighted by:

- Mandatory facial coverings, nose and mouth
- Hand sanitizer usage was encouraged
- Reservations were required to attend a service to facilitate contact tracing for KCHD
- Worshipers were ushered into worship areas and asked not to congregate before or after services.
- Only the two primary worship areas were open. Small groups could meet in larger rooms to accommodate established social distancing parameters.
- No nursery or children's activities.

When COVID cases in Knox County began to spike in December we decided to cease in-person worship.

Fortunately, COVID case numbers are beginning to decline in Knox County. With the decline of cases and vaccinations become more available, Knox County has loosened restriction on businesses and gatherings. Most non Methodist Churches have been meeting in person for some time—some never stopped, even during the spike. Notably, the two Methodist churches on either side of us Cokesbury and First Farragut, are both open for in-person worship. Our Concord United community has been understanding and supportive of our efforts to put safety first and remain online only ever since the beginning of December.

After researching COVID case trends in our area, networking with pastors at other churches, consulting with our COVID Advisory Team and our district superintendent, and prayerfully considering all of this information, your pastors have determined that it is time to reopen for in-person worship. Our community needs connection. Families are anxious to see their children and students be able to safely come together for worship fellowship, and study. Many adults are ready to worship with tier friends in our beautiful worship areas and meet for study and small group support. In light of this reality, we propose the following.

- On March 7th, we will resume in-person worship with two worship experiences: Traditional worship at 9:30 a.m. and Contemporary worship at 11:00 a.m. These services will be available online at those times and on demand anytime for those who are not ready to return.
- Reservations will not be necessary. The annual conference has asked that we document attendance with a photograph, which is standard procedure at most churches.
- Worshipers will be asked to wear facial coverings and maintain and social distancing. Seats will be marked so that family groups can sit together and others can keep the appropriate distance.
- Worshipers will be allowed to gather in hallways and encouraged to maintain proper distancing and wear masks.
- Sunday School classes can meet at 9:30 or 11:00 and will be assigned rooms depending on size so that appropriate distancing can be maintained.
- We will launch a Children's Church in the gym at 11:00 a.m. (This has been in the planning stages for some time.) We will offer a nurse for both services.
- Children's and Student ministry policies will reflect those implemented by Knox County Schools: masks, 6 feet separation when possible, food is allowed with proper separation, sports permitted with masks removed for strenuous activity.