

Plan for resuming in-person worship
Version 1.1 May 27, 2020

Purpose of this Document

To provide clarity on reopening efforts for church worship services.

This document provides guidance for the following:

- Protection of Vulnerable Members
- Social Distancing / Close-Contact
- Reopening Timeline / Sanitization
- Service, Ministry, & Event Changes

Flexibility

As the pandemic situation before us is constantly changing, as are the guidelines from national, state, and local officials, we want to emphasize the need for flexibility and adaptability as a key element of the following plan. We fully expect to discover needed changes as we progress through each phase.

With that flexibility in mind, this plan requires us to be prudent and wise on an individual level too. If you determine that you and/or your family should refrain from in-person attendance for a time, the Session supports your use of wisdom. We would encourage you to continue to participate in worship through the online resources that will continue to be provided throughout all phases of this plan while looking forward to the day we can all worship together physically.

Protection of Vulnerable Members

People over the age of 65, those with compromised immune systems, or anyone who is sick or has other health concerns are strongly encouraged to participate in online services until PHPC Phase 2. Volunteers in the vulnerable category will be asked not to serve until Phase 2 is achieved.

Social Distancing / Close-Contact

The Surgeon General and CDC strongly recommend that we keep social distancing (a 6' distance between people) at all times, which may be relaxed later. For services during PHPC Phase 1, we will need to adhere to social distancing.

The return to live services will likely result in a return of members hoping to see those they've missed over the last few months. There will be a desire to come into close contact with one another, which should be avoided in Phase 1, and cautious of even into Phase 2.

Restrictions on Children's Ministries will stay in effect the longest due to the inability of most children to practice social distancing.

Sacraments

The administration of the sacraments is part of corporate worship best expressed when the church is fully gathered together, therefore, for safety, prudential, and theological reasons, **baptisms and communion will be delayed until PHPC Phase 2.**

In Phase 2, the communion elements will be served in individualized prefilled communion cups with wafer included. People will pick up their own cups from a table when they enter the auditorium, and everyone will partake together at the appropriate time.

There will be one congregational prayer time instead of individual/family prayer.

This will continue until the Session determines it's safe to return to individual/family elements and prayer.

Location

This plan has been written in tentative expectation that we will worship at Harper Park Middle School. Potomac Hills may have to meet at another location before the school is reopened. In that case, we will adjust these plans as needed to conform to the specific facility at the new location.

Reopening Timeline – Target Dates are flexible and will likely be adjusted by the Session

Reopening timetables are predicated on the requirements set forth by the Commonwealth of Virginia, Loudoun County Government, and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). While some programs will continue during all Phases, they may have different expressions (online vs in-person group gatherings) depending on the Phase we're currently under.

**** Phase numbers correspond to the Commonwealth of Virginia Phase guidelines, but the timelines do not, as we also have to incorporate guidance from Loudoun County and the Loudoun County Public School system. As the Governor, the County, and the Schools update their respective guidelines, we will update our plans accordingly.**

PHPC PHASE 0 (RESTRICTED) Operations – CURRENT STATUS

Phase 0 operations have the strictest requirements due to concern of spread of the virus, where we have the greatest responsibility of doing our part to keep social distancing and isolation of church members. Since no more than **10 people** can gather in this Phase, no gathering of the congregation is authorized with the exception of recording church services or special communications to the church.

During this Phase, the following will be allowed:

- **Church Services** ONLINE ONLY
- **Youth** ONLINE ONLY
- **Children** ONLINE ONLY
- **Nursery** NOT PROVIDED
- **Small Groups** ONLINE ONLY
- **Special Events** ONLINE ONLY
- **Vulnerable** ONLINE ONLY

PHPC PHASE 1 (LIMITED) Operations – Tentative Target Date of June 14

Achieving Phase 1 Operations allows for the gathering of larger groups of people, and the state government has determined that places of worship can meet with up to **50% of room capacity** (according to the building permit). Church leadership will determine which activities will be allowed during each of those representative gathering levels, ensuring safety and security of those who gather.

During this Phase, the following will be allowed:

- **Church Services** IN PERSON and ONLINE
- **Youth** IN PERSON and ONLINE
- **Children** ONLINE
- **Nursery** NOT PROVIDED
- **Small Groups** IN PERSON and ONLINE
- **Special Events** IN PERSON and ONLINE
- **Vulnerable** ONLINE

The Session is encouraging vulnerable members to only attend church events online.

Use of Masks / Face Coverings will be strongly encouraged. Individuals are encouraged to use personal masks / face coverings; however, surgical masks will be provided for those who need them. **People who elect not to wear masks / face coverings are asked to refrain from singing.**

**** As of 5/26/20, the Governor of Virginia has mandated the use of masks / face coverings except in the cases of people with health conditions that preclude the wearing of masks. There is an exemption for religious services, but we're still strongly encouraging their use.**

Use of Hand Sanitizer will be strongly encouraged. Hand Sanitizer stations will be placed in the lobby.

If required, a cleaning team will be organized to clean the auditorium, nursery, and bathrooms before and between services. A disinfection checklist will be in place to clean rooms before and between services

Personal contact (shaking hands, hugs, etc.) is strongly discouraged between non-family members.

There will be no bulletins or handouts during this Phase, all information for worship will be projected.

There will be no coffee, snacks, or information table set up in the lobby.

There will be no ushers taking the offering during the service. Tithes and offerings may be placed in the collection boxes placed at the auditorium exits.

Potomac Hills will plan & observe socially distant seating and traffic flow (separate doors for entrance and exit). You may sit with your immediate family members only. All guests not related must sit or stand 6 feet from one another. You may be asked to move seats to ensure proper social distancing.

At the conclusion of the service, the congregation will be dismissed by sections to immediately depart via the designated exits. Any socializing with friends must take place outside, utilizing social distancing and strongly encouraging the use of masks / face coverings.

PHPC PHASE 2 (THE NEXT NORMAL) Operations – Tentative Target Date of June 28

Achieving Phase 2 Operations allows for the gathering of larger groups of people, and the state government has determined that places of worship can meet with up to **100% of room capacity** (according to the building permit). This Phase will serve as the next normal for the church, keeping protective measures in place, but allowing for the return of our vulnerable members.

During this Phase, the following will be allowed:

- **Church Services** IN PERSON and ONLINE
- **Youth** IN PERSON and ONLINE
- **Children** IN PERSON and ONLINE
- **Nursery** IN PERSON
- **Small Groups** IN PERSON and ONLINE
- **Special Events** IN PERSON and ONLINE
- **Vulnerable** IN PERSON and ONLINE

**** The Session may decide to keep some Phase 1 protective measures in place (such as social distancing) for the beginning of Phase 2 until such a time as it's determined that they are no longer necessary.**

Use of Hand Sanitizer will be encouraged. Hand Sanitizer stations will be placed in the lobby.

Nursery will be re-started. Parents are asked to pick up their children from the nursery during the closing hymn. As always, parents are encouraged to use good judgment in bringing young children.

Sunday School and Children's Church will be re-started, probably not immediately, but as soon as it's deemed safe to do so. As always, parents are encouraged to use good judgment in bringing young children.



WORSHIP SERVICES	ONLINE	IN PERSON & ONLINE	IN PERSON & ONLINE
SMALL GROUPS	ONLINE	IN PERSON & ONLINE	IN PERSON & ONLINE
SPECIAL EVENTS	ONLINE	IN PERSON & ONLINE	IN PERSON & ONLINE
VULNERABLE	ONLINE	ONLINE	IN PERSON & ONLINE
YOUTH	ONLINE	IN PERSON & ONLINE	IN PERSON & ONLINE
CHILDREN	ONLINE	ONLINE	IN PERSON
NURSERY	NOT PROVIDED	NOT PROVIDED	IN PERSON