



Covenant
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2020 Covid-19 Worship Phase-In Guidelines



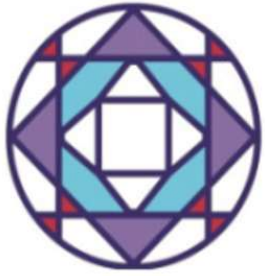
Overview

As city, state and federal authorities have now established guidelines for a “Phased-In” reopening of businesses and public gatherings, the Elders of Covenant plan to implement these new methods, policies and procedures with the highest standards set forth. Despite these precautions, attendees should be informed that all risks cannot be eliminated with the return of church building activities.

However, it is important to recognize that ministry and fellowship at Covenant will not be conducted in the same way that it was before the pandemic, and this likely for quite some time. The Elders of Covenant emphasize that under the current dynamic circumstances, no one is likely going to be pleased with every aspect of this plan, but the highest degree of care and thought has been used in the formulation of the specific policies set herein.

If you are uncomfortable with these guidelines (*whether you think they are too stringent or not stringent enough*) or you feel your household is just simply not ready to participate yet, the Elders of Covenant stress that no one ought to feel guilt or shame in continuing to worship from home.





Why Implement Such Strict Policies?

Although New Jersey's shelter-in-place order has been lifted, the challenge is that our area has been affected deeply by COVID-19.

NJ Health Department has stated that although authorities have decided to reopen businesses and houses of worship, we should remain on guard. New positive cases are being reported every day and we must do what we can to limit the spread of this virus

Though NJ's governor has rolled back his shelter-in-place order to reflect federal and state guidelines, Inside services must be at 25% capacity or 50 people whichever is less. Outside services must adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Covenant has a relatively unique building, which require potentially more strict enforcements and policy implementations than other locations.

The Elders of Covenant expect to experience unanticipated and unforeseen implementation issues, and therefore are taking the utmost care in each of the policies contained herein.

As we learn and grow from this new way to worship our Lord and Savior, we will adjust as necessary





Why Are We Holding Services At All?

Based on the guidelines received from our city, state, and federal authorities, churches are now able to reopen their doors using a “phased-in” approach. As the pandemic wears on, the mental health burden will increase as measures taken to slow the spread of the virus, such as social distancing, business and school closures, and shelter-in-place orders, lead to greater isolation and potential further financial distress. We believe this is a unique opportunity to love, serve, and care for our broken, depressed and hurting members and neighbors.

Additionally, worshiping together as a body allows the congregation to hear the word, fellowship, celebrate the Lord’s supper and more. This in turn, refocuses our hearts, restores our faith, reminds us of our standing and sends us out into a broken hurting world to proclaim the Gospel.

Despite being unable to eliminate all risks with the return of on-campus activities, we have taken the highest degree of care and utilized the highest standards set forth. Not only have the highest government guidelines been implemented, but in most specifics Covenant has implemented even higher standards and thresholds than the government guidelines due to our unique layout and facilities.

During this stage of implementation, we emphasize that if your household is uncomfortable with these guidelines, that no one ought to feel guilt or shame in continuing to stream services from home.





Recommendations On Attendance

Who should come? Who should stay home?

The CDC has identified the following groups as high risk:

- ❖ People 65 years and older.
- ❖ People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility.
- ❖ People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:
 - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma.
 - People who have serious heart conditions.
 - People who are immunocompromised. Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications.
 - People with severe obesity (*body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher*).
 - People with diabetes.
 - People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis.
 - People with liver disease.

Out of love for our congregation and all of its members, we strongly encourage all high risk individuals (and those directly caring for them) to evaluate the CDC guidelines before deciding whether to attend a service.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>





Good Hygiene & Social-Distancing Awareness

- ❖ Attendees who are sick or feel ill should not enter the church building, office or parking lot as a precaution and watch the streaming service instead.
- ❖ Attendees should avoid contact with others outside their household. They also must maintain 6-foot social distancing at all times (including during entry and exit from the narthex or sanctuary).
- ❖ Attendees should thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer after touching doors, chairs, or other frequently used surfaces in the church building.
- ❖ Attendees should disinfect frequently used personal items and surfaces as much as possible.

- ❖ Attendees will be required to wear face masks or medical face coverings before entering the church building narthex and sanctuary.
- ❖ Face masks must be tight enough to capture/block any accidental sneezes or coughs, as well as prevent attendees from touching their mouths.

- ❖ If an Attendee feels an accidental sneeze or cough coming on, they should do it in a tissue or the inside of their elbow.
- ❖ Taking off face coverings in the Church Building parking lot will be permitted only if 6-foot social distancing protocols are implemented. Attendees have the responsibility to each other to continue to practice social distancing.

Exceptions will only be made for staff and band members while on stage during the worship service.

These exempt staff and band members will have dedicated seating when off stage and use a dedicated restroom for their exclusive use.

Stage personnel must enter the building before members are let in and must remain segregated from the congregation until the sanctuary is clear.





Worship Process Summary

1. Pre-Registration & Seating Assignments
2. Entering the church building
3. Entering the Sanctuary
4. Inside the Sanctuary
5. Dismissal from the Sanctuary
6. Limited use of the restrooms
7. Other notes and thoughts



1. Pre-Registration & Seating Assignments

- ❖ Pre-registration will be conducted through the church office. Due to seating constraints, Covenant can have a maximum attendance of 50 people including staff (this includes 7 staff and volunteers).
 - Members are required to register by contacting the church office with the number of people, family name of who will be attending and if they are able to climb stairs to the balcony. Deadline is Friday 4PM before the week's service.
 - Phone: 856.429.1225
 - Email: info@CPCNJ.org
 - You will receive a confirmation from the church office of your registration. If there is no room for this week's service, you will be put as priority for the next available indoor service.

- ❖ No childcare will be provided during the indoor service. If attending with a child or children over 2 years old, they should be comfortable wearing a mask for the entirety of the service, comfortable seeing everyone else in a mask, and able to easily maintain a 6-foot distance from other worshippers during the service.

- ❖ No youth or adult Sunday Schools will meet during this stage



2. Entering the Church Building

- ❖ Please arrive early to allow for proper screening and seating processes.
- ❖ All attendees will be greeted by an usher and provided hand sanitizer and screened for symptoms. If an attendee does not have a face covering, there will be some available; however, we stress that attendees should bring their own face covering.
- ❖ Congregating inside of church lobby or sanctuary will not be permitted. The parlor will be closed off (see diagram on next page – gray areas that will be closed off).
- ❖ Meeting in the church parking lot is acceptable, and taking off face coverings in the parking lot will be permitted provided 6-foot social distancing protocols are adhered to. Attendees have the responsibility to continue to practice social distancing for the safety of others.
- ❖ Exterior doors will remain open. They will be closed during service, but an usher will be available to open/close them for Attendees.

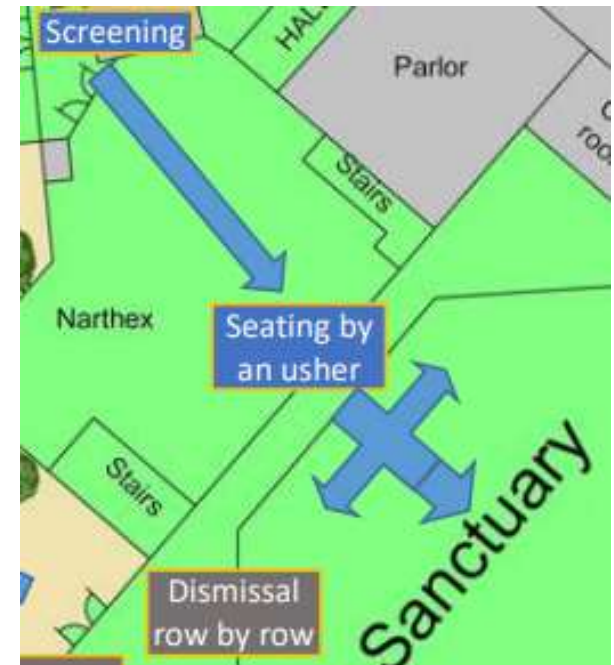


2. Entering the Church Building



3. Entering the Sanctuary

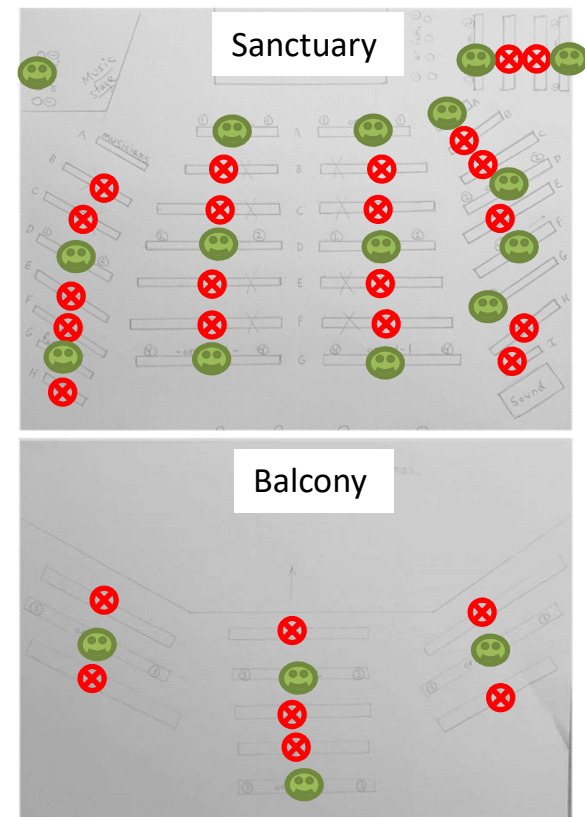
- ❖ Upon entering the narthex, attending households must line up at 6-foot tape lines in front of doors and advance only as the line progresses.
- ❖ Congregating in the building will not be permitted.
- ❖ Attendees will be seated by the ushers in their assigned locations.
- ❖ Sanctuary doors will remain open at all times.
- ❖ Bulletins will not be available; they may be accessed on your mobile device or read from the screens.



4. Inside the Sanctuary

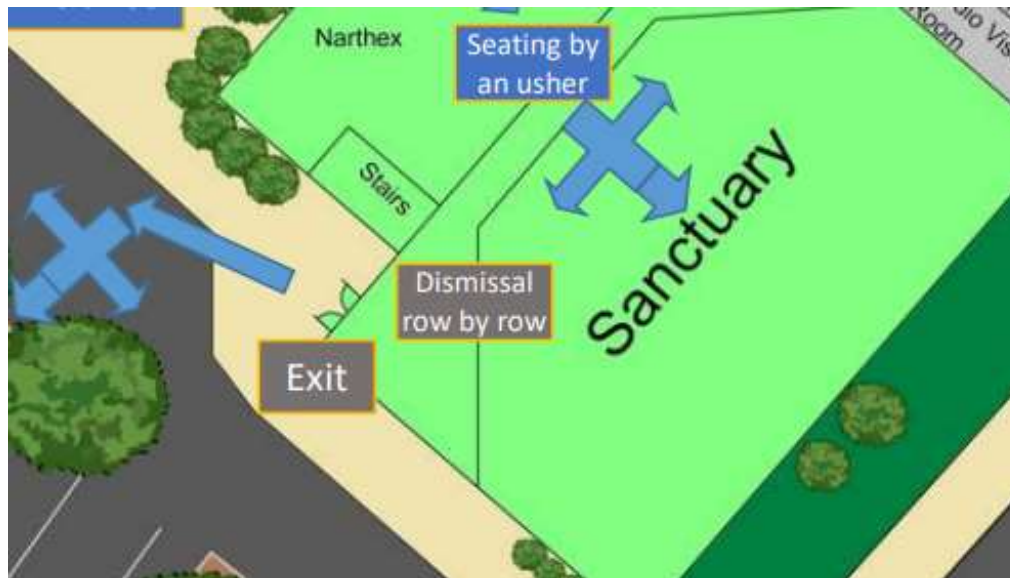
- ❖ We can accommodate a maximum of 50 attenders during this stage.
- ❖ Congregating inside of the sanctuary will not be permitted.
- ❖ Rows will be roped off, per state guidelines. Attendees will maintain a 6 foot gap between households. This will satisfy the minimum 6-foot distancing protocol.
- ❖ Bibles, hymnals and pens will be removed from the pews.
- ❖ All water fountains will be temporarily turned off. If needed, attendees can ask a gloved greeter/Deacon/usher for a bottle of water. Personal water bottles are permitted.

Seating Map



5. Dismissal From Sanctuary At End Of Service

- ❖ Exiting the sanctuary will be directed by our ushers through the back door (near sound board), in a row-by-row fashion. Be patient and maintain social- distancing.
- ❖ If congregants are seated in the balcony, they will be dismissed after the sanctuary.
- ❖ Exiting should be done in an expedited manner, without congregating.



6. Limited Use of Restrooms

- ❖ Ushers will limit restroom usage to 2 people at a time.
- ❖ Restrooms will be accessed through the Parlor hallway only.
- ❖ Restrooms will have “reminder signs” posted for social-distancing protocols. There will also be good hygiene reminders to disinfect and wash hands after each usage. Please make every effort to keep our church safe.
- ❖ Faucets, inner doors, toilet handles, and seats will be thoroughly wiped with Clorox wipes periodically through the service.



7. Other Notes & Thoughts

- ❖ Between services all hard surfaces will be wiped with CDC approved disinfectant and all porous surfaces will be sprayed with CDC approved disinfectant. Wood surfaces will be disinfected with cleaner that will not damage the wood or varnish. Please be aware of this if you have scent or chemical allergies.
- ❖ As the need arises, we may have more than one indoor service depending on registration requests.
- ❖ Jubilee playgrounds will be closed; The Gym will be closed.
- ❖ In the event that an attendee later tests positive, we ask that they contact the church office.
- ❖ The seating chart will be used for contact tracing in the event of a positive case at Covenant. This will allow us to alert those who may have been exposed.
- ❖ In the event of a positive case at Covenant, additional cleaning will be performed.
- ❖ There will be no collection plates passed. A plate will be available to leave your offering. You may also use the online service recently implemented for giving.



Thank You !

for your understanding & patience.



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