

FUMC COVID-19 Preparedness & Response Plan

October 5, 2020

It is the goal of the First United Methodist church of Howell to be a safe and welcoming place. We wish to protect ALL who enter our church building from exposure to COVID-19 to the greatest extent we are able. Decisions made about safety precautions will be based upon information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), Federal and State Executive Orders, MIOSHA, Livingston County Health Department, and the Michigan United Methodist Conference. This information is ever-changing and we will update these guidelines as needed. Our first lines of defense will be focused on social distancing and face coverings, as well as increased attention to cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces. It is necessary to first understand **how** COVID-19 is spread....

- ❖ The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person
 - Between people in close contact (within 6 feet of one another)
 - Respiratory droplets are produced by infected persons when they cough, sneeze or talk
 - These droplets can land in the mouths, noses or on the face of nearby people, or can be inhaled into the lungs.
 - COVID-19 may spread by people who are not showing any symptoms.
 - It MAY also be possible to contract COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, then touching your face (mouth, nose, eyes). Touch transfer does not appear to be as common as originally thought, though precautions will continue to be taken.
- ❖ The workplace COVID-19 Communications Coordinator is our Office Administrator, Jennifer Rhodes. Jennifer is responsible for implementing, monitoring and reporting on COVID-19 control strategies. When the Communications Coordinator is not present, our COVID-19 Trainer, Diane Griffin is designated to fill this roll.
- ❖ All employees, Committee Chairs and group leaders will receive COVID-19 training, specifically;
 - COVID symptoms
 - Workplace infection control practices, including proper hand cleaning hygiene
 - Proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - How to report a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19
 - How to report unsafe working situations or conditions
 - Signed documentation of training understanding/completion will be required and kept on file by the COVID-19 Coordinator.

- ❖ Group leaders are responsible for maintaining an accurate attendance list, including telephone numbers, for **every** member of **every** group who enters the building. This is imperative should contact tracing be necessary. At the conclusion of all meetings, attendance lists shall be turned in to the COVID-19 Communications Coordinator. Lists that need to be kept confidential may be placed in a sealed envelope and will only be opened if needed for contact tracing.
- ❖ Persons in the building will maintain 6 ft of separation from one another, to the maximum extent possible.
 - Anyone entering the building must wear a mask covering both mouth and nose. Mask must remain in place during the entire time any person is inside the building.
 - For those who do not have masks available, one will be provided at common entrances.
- ❖ Outdoor meetings will also observe social distancing of 6' and members should wear masks whenever possible. Masks are not required during physical exertion but are recommended at all other times.
- ❖ Increased cleaning and disinfecting will be done on high-touch surfaces and shared equipment. Supplies will be made available. Leaders should clean and disinfect all washable surfaces at the conclusion of their meeting.
- ❖ Groups meeting inside the building should use **only** the room assigned to them and refrain from moving any furniture, as it has been placed to maximize social distancing.
- ❖ Any employee, congregant, leader or group member experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms or testing positive should remain at home. Any person who has been in the building during their illness or within the 2 days prior to having symptoms shall notify their group leader and the COVID-19 Communications Coordinator as soon as possible.
 - Any persons infected with COVID-19 will be allowed to return to the building when they are no longer infectious according to their physician or CDC guidelines, whichever is later.
 - The work/meeting area used by the infected person will be temporarily closed for deep cleaning.
- ❖ Any building user should not hesitate to report unsafe COVID-19 conditions to their church contact person or FUMC COVID Communication Coordinator (Jenn Rhodes/Diane Griffin). Best practices during the coronavirus pandemic include frequent cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces as well as proper personal protective equipment when appropriate.

Covid-19 Preparedness and Response Plan

Frequently Asked Questions

9/30/20

1. If churches are exempt from the Governor's orders, why are we following them?
Bishop Bard of the Michigan Conference of the United Methodist Church has advised that churches carefully review and follow guidelines that are appropriate to their situation. These guidelines have been adopted after consideration of our location and the size and makeup of our congregation.
2. If I am seated in a restaurant, I can remove my mask. Why can't I remove it in church?
This simple modification of the Governor's orders was made because it's not possible to eat while wearing a mask. At FUMC we have decided to omit food and beverages for the time being so that masks do not have to be removed for any reason (other than while receiving communion elements).
3. If I'm wearing a mask covering my mouth, why can't I sing in church?
Research has shown that singing, shouting or breathing heavily can shoot saliva droplets farther than 6-feet and that droplets can escape through or around many types of masks. Humming, moving to the music and clapping are safer options right now.
4. Why can't additional family members come and hang out in the café while I am in my meeting?
Group leaders take attendance for members of their group. They cannot keep accurate records for other family members who may enter and leave the building while a meeting is in progress. Food and beverages are not allowed in the café at this time and this is also difficult to monitor when family members enter and leave at various times.
5. Why is there no nursery provided?
To protect our littlest disciples, their families and our Nursery volunteers from potential infection, nursery services have been suspended. Babies often need to be held and cannot wear masks and some of our volunteers are in the higher-risk category. We hope soon to provide a place where parents can take a restless child to play during worship, observing proper social distancing.
6. Why is keeping track of attendance such a big deal?
Accurate attendance is the responsibility of the leader of each group and is imperative for contact tracing in the event of a COVID-19 infection. All known cases must be reported to the Livingston County Health Department and anyone who may have had exposure to the infected person must be contacted and monitored for symptoms.

7. When can Wednesday Weekly meals begin again?

The answer to this question is unknown at the moment. However, a drive-through meal is being planned for October and could be repeated if it is successful.

8. Why are we asked not to move furniture in our meeting room?

Furniture has been moved and placed after measuring for correct social distancing. If you move chairs, you may violate the 6' rule. If you have questions or concerns about your meeting room, please feel free to call the church office to discuss alternatives.

9. Why can't I drink coffee during my meeting and/or during worship?

Eating and drinking require removal of masks and for now, masks are required AT ALL TIMES when inside the building.

10. Why do I need to keep my coat with me while I am in my meeting?

First, it will reduce the incidence, though unlikely, of COVID-19 transfer via clothing from an infected person. Also, coat hangers have been removed to reduce the number of touch surfaces that need disinfecting between groups.

11. How many cases of COVID-19 has FUMC had to report to the Health Department?

To date, none. We believe that the care our leaders and users have taken to observe proper social distancing guidelines is having its intended effect, and we need to continue to be vigilant until such a time as we no longer need these restrictions. And on that day we will have a party.