



GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME

MART  
FIRST UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH

# Back to Church

## State of Texas Guidelines

The government must give special consideration to houses of worship when issuing orders related to the COVID-19 crisis.

- Houses of worship provide “essential services.”
- Houses of worship should conduct as many activities as possible remotely, and should follow federal guidelines when providing services in person.
- Houses of worship should help slow the spread of the virus.

When conducting services, houses of worship may consider implementing the following practices:

- Encourage all attendees who are 65 and above to stay home and watch the services online, or provide a “senior service” exclusively for attendees 65 and above to attend in person.
- Ask all attendees who have an underlying at-risk health condition to stay home and watch the services online.
- Equip ushers and greeters with gloves and masks.
- Consider keeping child care closed, unless the house of worship can comply with CDC guidelines for child care facilities.

# Back to Church

## State of Texas Guidelines

- Ensure all attendees sanitize their hands and put on a mask before entering the building.
- Ensure attendees sit with their family unit, use social distancing between each unit, and, if necessary, add more service times to facilitate distancing.
- Clergy should dismiss attendees by family unit, maintaining social distancing.
- Staff should sanitize seats and frequently touched surfaces between services.
- Consider refraining from passing collection plates and instead provide a central collection box in the building or encourage online giving.
- Consider how the sacraments can be administered without attendees having to touch the same surfaces and objects.

# Back to Church

## Central Texas Guidance

Any church choosing to reopen must take careful steps to maintain social distancing per Federal, State, County and/or other appropriate civil medical authorities. According the latest Attorney General Guidance for Houses of Worship During the COVID-19 Crisis, Houses of worship should conduct as many of their activities as possible remotely. Services that cannot be done remotely should be conducted in accordance with guidance from the White House and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”). Houses of worship, like providers of other essential services, are to follow additional guidance from the White House and CDC whenever possible. A list of guidelines is below.

- Encourage all attendees who are 65 and above to stay home and watch the services online, or provide a “senior service” exclusively for attendees 65 and above to attend in person.
- Ask all attendees who have an underlying at-risk health condition to stay home and watch the services online.
- Equip ushers and greeters with masks and ensure they are used properly.
- Consider keeping childcare closed, unless the house of worship can comply with CDC guidelines for childcare facilities.
- Ensure all attendees sanitize their hands and put on a mask before entering the building.
- Ensure attendees sit with their family unit, use social distancing between each unit. Consider blocking off every other pew row. If necessary, add more service times to facilitate distancing.
- Clergy should dismiss attendees by family unit, maintaining social distancing.

# Back to Church

## Central Texas Guidance cont.

- Staff should sanitize seats, doorknobs and handles, bathrooms, and other frequently touched surfaces between services.
- Consider refraining from passing collection plates and instead provide a central collection box in the building or encourage online giving.
- Consider how the sacraments can be administered without attendees having to touch the same surfaces and objects.
- Instruct sick employees, volunteers, and guests to stay home;
- Practice social distancing by maintaining appropriate distance between people;
- Maintain good hygiene by washing your hands frequently, using hand sanitizer, using your elbow to cover coughs, and not touching your face;
- Implement environmental cleanliness and sanitation practices; and
- Clean and disinfect work areas frequently.

# Back to Church

## General Guidance

- We strongly recommend and support the current state and local guidance.
- Health protocols for serving your attendees: Strongly encourage the at-risk populations to watch or participate in the service remotely.
  - We will continue to record and broadcast services.
  - At-risk population are those who are 65 or older, especially those with chronic lung disease; moderate to severe asthma; chronic heart disease; severe obesity; diabetes; chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis; liver disease; or weakened immune system.
- If you are not feeling well or think that you have been exposed, please watch the service remotely.
- Family units are defined as the following: Two or more members of the same household can sit adjacent to one another, with two seats (or six feet separation) empty on either side and Two individuals who are not members of the same household but who are attending together can sit adjacent to one another, with two seats(or six feet separation) empty on either side.
- Children are encouraged to attend but there is no nursery.
- No “on-campus” group activities yet.

# Back to Church

## Safety Protocols

- The safety of everyone is paramount!
- The sanctuary and open areas will be thoroughly sanitized before and after each service
- There will be no bulletins
- There will be no greeting session during service
- No coffee station or snacks (you may bring your own)
- Collection baskets will be placed at the entrance/exit, no collection plates will be passed
- All material will be broadcasted (no hymnals, bibles, etc. in the pews)
- All other floors of the church will be closed off at this time
- No congregating in the Narthex, bathrooms, etc.
- Controlled entrance and exit
- No funerals, weddings, or gatherings of any kind
- Phase 1: “Limited” Sunday Worship- September 20th
- Phase 2: Return of Small Groups- Tentatively January 1, 2021
- Phase 3: Fully open with NO restrictions- TBD

# Back to Church

## Safe Entry/Exit and Limited Access

- Entrance and Exit will be through East and West doors on ground level that face parking lot and street
- Elevator door/Elevator will be open for those that require the assistance. Only one person at a time may use the elevator. A security team member will be there to assist.
- Single Point of Exit (East and West doors on ground floor)
- Internal/External Security Team
- Greeting Station
  - Hand Sanitizer Provided
  - Mask Provided
- Seating (Security team)
- Distance compliant seating plan
- No Nursery available
- Bathrooms behind sanctuary open
- No coffee station (water and coffee brought in are fine)
- Controlled dismissal

# Back to Church

**Motion Approved**

**Mart First United Methodist Church proposes that we open our church for in-person services beginning September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020. We will conduct organized training and then follow a first and second service in order to meet our social distancing requirements. We will follow and enforce all Federal, State and local guidance regarding social distancing and recommended practices.**

# Back to Church

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. What will social distancing look like in your worship space? How will you ensure people are six feet apart and that there is no congregating? We have physically marked off every other pew in the sanctuary, removed the coffee/snack bar, and will have members of our Security Team to guide people in and out of the church via controlled entrances and exits. We will create an “explanation” video that will be shared with the entire congregation prior to our first in-person service.
2. Where will hand sanitizer stations be located, as well as masks for those who do not bring their own? Who will remind folks to sanitize their hands and wear a mask before entering the building? We will have masks and touchless hand sanitizer stations at each entrance and in different places around sanctuary. There will be members of our Security Team at each service to assist and assure safe practices for all attending.

# Back to Church

## Frequently Asked Questions

3. Who will be responsible for environmental cleanliness and sanitization between services? How will you clean and disinfect areas? What products will you use? What schedule will you follow? Our on-staff custodial team will thoroughly clean and sanitize each week and a team of volunteers will sanitize in between the first and second service. We have removed most “congregational” shared items from the sanctuary (bibles, hymnals, etc.) and we will not use bulletins or provide food or coffee. We will use industrial products that are proven to kill most germs, including coronavirus. The sanctuary, second floor restrooms, and all touchable surfaces will be sanitized after each service.
4. Will you have your restrooms open? Yes. We have decided that we need to have bathroom facilities available. There will be disinfecting spray in the second floor restrooms for anyone who uses the facilities to spray all surfaces before leaving the restroom. The restrooms will be part of the cleaning schedule in between and after services.

# Back to Church

## Frequently Asked Questions

5. How will you encourage attendees who are more vulnerable or have underlying health conditions to worship online? Will you provide a “senior service” exclusively for attendees 65 and above to attend in person? During our “explanation” video, we will continue to reiterate the risks to those over 65, as well as those who are more vulnerable due to underlying health issues. Our first service (8:30am) will be for those that have remained quarantined and had very little or no exposure to others. The second service (10:30am) will be for those that work out in the world and therefore, have had more chance of exposure to the Covid-19 virus. We will continue to offer online services as well as posting to social media each week.
6. What accommodations will be made for the Security Team, musicians, and pastor to use masks? Will the church use printed bulletins which would be handled by multiple people? The church will be providing hand sanitizer and masks for all volunteers, members, and visitors. We will not be using any bulletins or printed materials. All materials will be “presented” via power point.

# Back to Church

## Frequently Asked Questions

7. How will you make sure everyone who enters the building has a mask on? Will you provide masks? We will ask all attendees to wear masks during the “explanation” video. If they do not have their own masks, the Security Team will provide everyone who enters the church a mask. The masks are disposable so they will not need be cleaned or reused.
8. What are you going to do about those who show up with children in need of childcare? We will communicate in our “explanation” video that there will not be childcare available for services, at this time. As always in our services, children are invited to sit with their family in the sanctuary.
9. How will it be communicated that attendees sit with their family unit, using social distancing between each unit? Will you need to add more service times to facilitate distancing. This will be covered in the “explanation” video and the Security Team will assist people when helping seat people at each service. Utilizing every other pew and predicting family unit limitations, we estimate we can seat between 50-60 at each service. For this reason, we will be worshipping in two services: 8:30am for those that have been more “sheltered” and 10:30am for those that have had more “exposure”.

# Back to Church

## Frequently Asked Questions

10. How will it be communicated that attendees sit with their family unit, using social distancing between each unit? Will you need to add more service times to facilitate distancing. This will be covered in the “explanation” video and the Security Team will assist people when helping seat people at each service. Utilizing every other pew and predicting family unit limitations, we estimate we can seat between 50-60 at each service. For this reason, we will be worshipping in two services: 8:30am for those that have been more “sheltered” and 10:30am for those that have had more “exposure”.
11. What plan will be used to seat and dismiss attendees by family unit, maintaining social distancing? The Safety Team will seat from the back row going forward and dismiss from the front row going backwards. This will maintain an even entrance and dismissal, maintaining social distancing.
12. What will be the plan for the sacraments? We are not planning on communion for the first few services. Whenever communion is offered, we will use pre-packaged cups and wafers and will distribute as people leave the sanctuary.

# Back to Church

## Frequently Asked Questions

13. How will offerings be collected and counted to ensure the safety of your counters?  
Currency is a carrier of the virus, you will need to have a centralized collection box, no passing the plate. We will place offering baskets at both sanctuary doors. We will not use ushers or pass collection plates. Offering can be placed in the baskets as you are dismissed from service. The counters will use gloves to count and collect the offerings after the service. The baskets will be part of the sanitization plan.
14. How long until we are back to “normal”? We will continue to watch numbers from CDC, McLennan County, and local authorities. Currently, we are in “online only” phase. We are looking at moving in Phase 1 on September 20, 2020. We will remain in Phase 1 for the rest of 2020. Phase 1 consists of only limited Sunday worship services. If cases/positivity rate decreases, we will enter Phase 2 in January 2021 and begin small groups (Sunday School, JAM, expanded worship, indoor funerals, weddings, and gatherings for members and community). Phase 3 is a full opening with no limitations. This will happen when Covid-19 is no longer a danger. If, at any point, it is necessary, we will return to a stricter, safer phase.