

**Harpeth Presbyterian Fall 2020 Plan**  
**COVID Task Force: Dr. Mary Keown, Judy Dancico, Molly Nugen, James Peeler, Rev.**  
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**August 12, 2020**

The COVID Task Force has worked to develop a plan that will give our church a sense of stability through the remainder of 2020. We have taken into account our best understanding of public health, the safety of our members and community, our desire to gather together and worship God, and the input from our congregation. We are grateful for the input we received from the over 75 people who were represented in our congregational survey.

Our survey asked a variety of questions, centered around how comfortable people are attending in person events at church. 60% of our respondents are attending worship in person, 37% of our respondents are worshipping online. Of those who have attended in person worship, 95% believe that our current guidelines and behavior are reasonably safe. For those who have not yet attended in person, 40% are unlikely to attend in-person worship until there is a sustained decline in COVID-19 cases in our area and 18% are unlikely to attend in-person worship until there is a vaccine or effective treatment for COVID-19. People's readiness for in person small group classes/their opinions about being in person or on Zoom varied widely. When considering the question of when to return to two services, 49% said they were happy to worship at 10am. 33% said they prefer to worship at 8:30 but are willing to worship at 10. 14% said they prefer to worship at 11 but are willing to worship at 10.

The task force used these responses to help guide our decision making for Fall 2020. We also consulted with our church musicians, Children's/Youth ministry team, Adult Education team, other clergy colleagues, and various health experts.

The task force will meet regularly to make adjustments as needed throughout the fall. Before the October session meeting, the Task Force will review these guidelines, reevaluate, and present any recommended changes to the session. **These guidelines will inform our decision making through at least October 19, 2020.** We recommend:

1. That worship continue in person through the fall (public health permitting), adhering to safety guidelines
2. That Sanctuary capacity be limited to 60
3. That a live stream of our worship services be provided indefinitely. That steps be taken to ensure a reliable, functional camera system.
4. That we continue to hold only one worship service at 10:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. This will allow us to continue to easily share space with Priestly Miller Preschool, monitor our attendance/adherence to guidelines, and maintain a meaningful worship experience for the entire church until the majority of our congregation is comfortable/safe worshipping in person.
5. That should worship attendance in the Sanctuary be regularly near capacity, the task force will reevaluate worship plans
6. That in the event that a person who attended worship on Sunday tests positive for COVID-19, worship will be held *online only* for the following two weeks, a notification will immediately be sent to the church email list, and the task force will attempt to contact by phone those who were present at the service.

7. That no other events besides worship be held on church property on Sunday *mornings* (this includes children's, youth and adult Sunday School, and nursery care).
8. That Children's Ministry occur in an occasional, need-based capacity. Our children's ministry team is considering ways to support the children of our church who are primarily worshipping from home.
9. That Youth Ministry continue with at least one in person, socially distanced activity monthly on Sunday evenings.
10. That Adult Sunday School be held weekly on Zoom, in the late afternoon/early evening
11. That a midweek, in person Bible Study be held at the church, with appropriate masks and physical distancing
12. That funerals be allowed in the sanctuary, adhering to all other worship guidelines
13. That worship on Rally Day (September 13, 2020) be an outdoor service with communion served
14. That committee meetings be held either on Zoom or in person with appropriate masks and physical distancing, and that Zoom always be provided as an option for committee members who are not comfortable meeting in person.
15. That midweek groups (sewing group, women of the church, choir, etc.) decide internally when they are comfortable resuming in person meetings. That the church be available for use, assuming the groups are willing to comply with the guidelines for masks and physical distancing
16. That the church make every effort to continue mission work in ways that are safe and adhere to our guidelines

#### **Guidelines for any use of church property:**

1. Church staff and church visitors will wear masks when in the church building with others.
2. Masks will be worn outside on church property when unable to maintain physical distancing (this includes wearing masks during any worship services outside on church property).
3. Physical distancing will be observed at all in person gatherings on church property (both indoors and outdoors)
4. Church committee meetings, other church group meetings, and outside group meetings may be held with adherence to the guidelines
5. When occupying space that will be used by others within 48 hours, the group will wipe down any surfaces of equipment that is used

#### **Guidelines for worship:**

1. Masks will be worn appropriately (with nose and mouth covered) by all individuals over age three.
2. Every other pew will be roped off to ensure physical distancing
3. Individuals from separate households will maintain physical distancing
4. Services will be condensed and will last no longer than 45 minutes
5. We will not have physical passing of the peace
6. We will not invite anyone up for the children's sermon
7. We will remove all hymnals and Bibles from the pews and print words to the hymns in the bulletin.
8. We will have all ushers/greeters use hand sanitizer as they hand out bulletins and take up the offering (no one else to touch the offering plates).

9. We will not have the choir sing until our co-music directors deem it safe.
10. We will ask that all congregational singing/speaking to be done softly and with masks on.
11. We will forgo serving any food and/or beverage or have any social fellowship gatherings.
12. We will restrict access to just the sanctuary and bathrooms and focus our deep cleaning efforts in those areas.
13. Communion will be served once a month using prepackaged communion supplies

**Guidelines for mask wearing at worship:**

1. Appropriate mask wearing (with mouth and nose covered) will be necessary in order to continue meeting in the church building. We have made a promise to our community to create a safe space for them to worship. If one person is not wearing a mask, this creates an unsafe atmosphere for singing, speaking, and conversation, and creates a feeling of mistrust among those for whom mask wearing is the primary reason they feel comfortable attending worship.
2. If an individual does not wish to wear a mask during worship, they are invited to participate in worship from home
3. If an individual attends worship without wearing a mask, a member of the task force will remind the individual of the need for masks and ask the individual to comply, in deference to the needs of others in the community. The task force will continue the conversation until a workable solution is found.
4. If mask compliance is an issue during worship, the session will meet to reevaluate the overall safety of in person worship.