

Pandemic Preparedness Plan
Bridgeport United Methodist Church
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This plan is, initially, created to address the pandemic involving the 2019 novel (new) coronavirus or COVID-19. This new respiratory virus has impacted the world, including the United States. In order to prepare to protect our Sisters and Brothers in Christ and to ensure a safe and healthy process of returning to corporate worship, this plan outlines steps to be taken. In addition, this plan sets forth guidance for further pandemic events that may affect our church community.

Worship Plan

Bridgeport United Methodist Church will follow the guidance of the Indiana Conference and work in cooperation within federal, state, and local directions.

Worship will be addressed in three stages in order to ensure the health of our church community.

Stage 1 – Stay at Home and worship via Facebook and YouTube. NOTE: This process began in March 2020.

Preparation – Prior to Stage 2, the following steps will be taken to ensure cleaning of the building and facilities.

- Disinfect door handles, counters, and desktop surfaces.
- Keep tissue and hand sanitizer available.
- Avoid drinking fountains. **CLOSE FOUNTAINS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.**
- Wipe down cell phones, phones, computer keyboards, music instruments and other office tools (such as copiers) regularly.
- Keep trash cans available throughout the building.

Stage 2 – Limited on-site Worship will be available after June 14, unless additional direction is received from the conference or from government Executive Order. It is important that everyone play their part to ensure the health of each other. Even though we want to see all of our church family it is very important to stay home if sneezing, coughing, or have a runny nose.

Stage 3 – Welcome Back. Full worship and church activities will be available. This date will be announced during worship, through Facebook, telephone contact, and mail.

During Stage 2, the following steps will be taken. We apologize for any inconvenience but ask for everyone for your cooperation and understanding.

To maintain a minimum of contact, it is requested that all attendees enter through the East doors (behind the church). People with disability, may continue to enter either entrance. Assistance will be provided, if requested. Trash cans will be available at doors leading toward the sanctuary.

Worshippers may then enter the sanctuary and after service are requested to leave through the North Doors, by the church office. All worshippers should place any soiled materials in the trash cans located by the doors.

Health Screening and Protective Equipment

Volunteers will be located at the entrance door to greet worshippers and to ask them a variety of questions. The volunteers will be using protective gloves, face covers and hand sanitizer. (See Appendix A for Volunteer Listing)

Questions asked of all entering and posted at the entrances:

- Do you currently have, or had in the last 14 days a temperature?
- Are you having any symptoms of cold or flu?’
- Have you been in contact with anyone that has, or may be, infected with COVID-19?

NOTE: If any of these questions is a yes, please ask the individual to please self-quarantine for 14 days from the time that the symptoms / temperature issues began.

Temperature Check (Non-contact) – During Stage 2, Volunteers will be using a non-contact thermometer to read forehead temperature. Anyone having a temperature at or above 100.4°F MUST be kindly asked to leave and to self-quarantine for 14 days. Temperature checks will become voluntary, or at request, in Stage 3.

It is recommended that all worshippers wear appropriate face protection if they cannot remain 6 feet away from others. Use of face covers / masks will continue until the pandemic has ended. Protective equipment will be provided by purchase from the general operating funds. The selection and provision of appropriate protection will be provided through the Pastor and the pandemic team. (See Appendix A)

Cleaning

Prior to worship service a team of volunteers will properly clean the public areas of the church. This team will be protected with gloves and masks and all used materials will be disposed of each day. In addition, the following items will be addressed. (See Appendix A for Volunteer Listing)

- Hand sanitizer on small stand as enter each door of sanctuary.
- Hand sanitizer AND hand soap clearly marked in bathrooms. Use of soap and water is encouraged. Hand sanitizer should only be used when soap and water is not available.
- Tissues on pews.
- Cleaning wipes to clean backs of pews where people grip when standing.
- Clean all public counters several times a day.
- Hymnals will be removed from the pews until the Pandemic is over. The hymnals will be wiped down prior to replacing them in the pews. Worshippers are requested to bring their personal Bibles each week.

- Handwashing: Birthday song x2 or alphabet song and don't touch face.

Seating

Maintaining a safe distance is very important to preventing contact with individuals that may be ill. If worshipping as a Family Unit, they may sit in a pew together. If worshipping as individuals, it is important that 6 feet of distance be maintained. Markings will be available to assist in maintaining the 6' Distance requirement.

In the event that attendance is too large to be accommodated in the sanctuary, a separate area of Unity Hall will be set up with chairs, properly spaced and the service broadcast by loudspeaker. When the process is completed, a video broadcast will occur on the television screen in this area.

Worship

Offering: During the pandemic, the offering will be taken by placing the offering into drop boxes located by the entrance and exit. These boxes will be accessed after worship by the Finance team. This process will continue until the end of the pandemic. Any member handling the checks or cash shall use a pair of nitrile gloves.

Communion: The practice of communion is a vital part of our worship. However, there are steps that we must take to ensure the health of the participants.

- Hand sanitizer should be used by all servers and pastors.
- During the pandemic alternative methods of handing communion will be practiced. The current form of communion will be completed using prepared packets containing the bread and cup.
- Preparers **MUST** wear nitrile gloves and masks and each item will be wrapped with cellophane.
- The prepared communion will be placed on the table outside the sanctuary and, if needed, on a small table in overflow area. Each person will pick up the communion pack when entering prior to the service. Each person is asked to place the container and cellophane in a trash can after service.

General Instructions:

- Avoid passing out any items to children during children's time, during Worship.
- Greeters: greet members with a squirt of hand sanitizer, but no hugs or handshakes.
- Discourage hugging and handshakes, find alternative ways of greeting (elbow bump, bow).

Hospitality / Breakfast

The time of Hospitality / Breakfast and special meals will not be held until Stage 3. Prior to the first week that this program will be offered, the following steps will be taken: (See Appendix A for Volunteer Listing)

Preparation: All cooks and servers will be using protective equipment when preparing and handling food.

Service: NO ONE is allowed in the kitchen except the hospitality team. Meals will be prepared and placed on plates, wrapped in cellophane and passed through the window to the person. Drinks will be poured by the hospitality team and handed through the window. All eating utensils will be pre-packed and sealed.

Seating: Families may sit at a table. All individuals must remain 6 feet apart. If no space is available for dining, individuals will be asked to go out to the East parking lot. Temporary tables will be placed, weather permitting, for additional seating. Worshipers may also take the meal and eat in their vehicle, if they wish.

Sunday School

The continued study of the Word is vital to growth as a member of the body of Christ. The provision of Sunday School will be addressed in three stages.

Stage 1 – A children’s message will be part of the video / web-based service. The adult class will self-study at home.

Stage 2 – There will be no Sunday School during Stage 2, Sanctuary service only. Self-study is recommended.

Stage 3 – Classes and Children’s Service Begin with total cleaning of the classroom areas prior to the start of this stage. (See Appendix A for Volunteer Listing)

Children’s Church / Nursery: Cleaning areas prior to Stage 3 and on-going as needed.

- Sanitize and disinfect the nursery.
- Keep toys picked up, putting out a few at a time, and not allowing children to share toys if possible. Use duplicates for second child.
- Wipe down surfaces.
- Wipe runny noses, then clean child/worker hands with hand sanitizer.
- Avoid snacks when possible.
- Adult handwashing after skin contact with children.
- Wipe down all chairs, counters.
- Have cleaning supplies handy for adults, out of reach of children.
- Use hand sanitizer after changing diapers.
- Maintain space at 6 feet apart and/or use face covers.
- Face covers are recommended for teachers, students, and helpers until the end of the pandemic.

Choir and Music Ministry

Music is a powerful voice in the worship experience. During the current pandemic, the choir will not practice or provide worship music. Individuals that wish to provide special music will coordinate with the music director.

During the pandemic, only songs projected on the large screen will be used in order to prevent contamination via the hymnal. Regular general cleaning to wipe down hymnals, folders and Bibles will be done weekly.

Special Church Functions

Special events will not be held during a pandemic. This includes, Movie Night, Vacation Bible School and Church Sales.

Planning may begin for these events in the future, with appropriate controls and cleaning. These events will be planned by the Missions and Worship committees and the final plans presented to the Administrative Council for approval prior to the event.

Other Considerations

During a pandemic, follow routine steps to ensure coverage of the pastor, music department, finance and other essential portions of the worship functions.

This plan will be reviewed as needed and updated to reflect any additional requirements based on the needs at that time. The plan will be put into action when it becomes apparent that a pandemic or epidemic situation has occurred.

Revision Record

The most recent revisions shall be placed in BOLD type and underlined. Revision to this plan will be tracked by indicating the date of the revision and will be tracked in a chart in Appendix A.

Adoption

This Pandemic Plan was initially adopted during a meeting of the church Administrative Board held on June 6, 2020, with the following participants:

Jean Smith, President	Ken Loudenback, Pastor	Cheryl Kuritz, Lay Leader
Greg Bright	Julie Bright	Pam Jones
Steve Jones	Anthony Kuritz	Dave Pearson
Sarah Pichon	Patty Reese	Judy Rutter
Charlene Swank	Carol Warwick	

Appendix A
Volunteer Listing

Task Area	Committee Head	Volunteers
Pandemic Team	Cheryl Kuritz	Tony Kuritz, Ken Loudenback
Health Screening / Greeters	Judy Rutter	Cheryl Kuritz, TBD
Cleaning	Melanie Hall	Volunteers
Social Distance Team	Charlene Swank	Judy Rutter, Julie Bright
Hospitality / Breakfast	Carol Warwick	Patty Reese
Sunday School	Sarah Pichon	Pichon and Jones Families

Revision Record

Revision Date	Sections Affected