

**Salem United Methodist Church of Keedysville**  
**Building Reopen Strategy**

This document has been prepared as thoughtfully and prayerfully as possible. It is a lengthy document. Please take the time to read it completely to avoid confusion as we live into it as a community of faith. **Thank you for your investment in reading the document.**

This “Building Reopen Strategy” is a proposed roadmap for reopening the building based on currently available information. Nothing in this document is to be considered an absolute as the current COVID-19 situation is fluid and continues to evolve. Like any road map, detours could be likely that would require changes to the details hereafter. A potential detour is the return to a second closure if the COVID-19 situation would worsen.

The reopening strategy is based on **trust** and the **expectation** that our people will honor the guidelines of this document. For the good of all, it is the expectation that all persons who come to the building will follow them to the best of their ability. We have to be able to trust that all of us are following these guidelines.

We understand none of this is ideal. We all yearn for community and gathering as before. Let us recognize that the movement of the Holy Spirit is never limited and God will continue to move in our lives and our community no matter what we have to do to ensure the well-being of all.

These guidelines have been compiled in consultation with some of the many informed medical/scientific/legal professionals within both the Salem family and our surrounding community.

**Dates**

**A. Worship**

- a. Live in-house, in-person worship will resume beginning Sunday, Oct. 5, 2020. Live ONLINE worship will continue to be offered via Facebook and Zoom platforms

**B. Groups**

- a. Small groups will be encouraged to meet via online, however beginning October 1, 2020 small groups may meet in the building in larger gathering rooms and following distancing and safety practices. Groups will be asked to limit activities to one room. A point of contact with the group must be established and will be responsible for making sure the safety precautions are being carried out and proper clean-up of the space occurs (a checklist will be provided).

**Building Usage Policy (Worship and Other Activities):**

- A. Masks will be required to be worn by all persons while in the building. Those who do not have an appropriate mask may be supplied with one if available.
- B. Hand sanitizing “stations” are available throughout the building and people are encouraged to make use of them frequently when inside.
- C. Because of our building’s limited space, there will be no traffic flow “patterns.” Please be mindful to keep distance between persons. Floors will be clearly marked with distancing measures to help reduce close proximity.
- D. Our building is professionally cleaned once a month. To help with cleaning and to keep people safe, please be considerate and clean/wipe down a space/touched surfaces after use. This means:

- a. In restrooms, wipe down and spray surfaces with provided disinfectants
  - i. If at all possible, please limit church bathroom use.
- b. Be mindful of touched surfaces; try to limit touching furnishings, switches, handles, etc.
- E. Small groups will be given a checklist to ensure safe practices are being used.

**Worship Guidelines:**

- A. IF local governments return to Phase I, the building will be closed and we will only offer live ONLINE worship only.
- B. Live IN-HOUSE worship will be conducted with the following guidelines:
  - a. Building usage procedures indicated above apply to all worship services.
  - b. Everyone must wear a mask. Those who do not have a mask may be provided one. Those unable to wear a mask are considered “at risk” to themselves and to the other worshippers and should continue to worship online.
  - c. “At risk” people are encouraged to continue to worship online, although each person will make their own informed decision.
  - d. Anyone with cold, allergy, or flu-like symptoms should stay home and worship online.
  - e. Congregants are asked to take their temperature and anyone with a temperature of 100 degrees or more should stay home and worship online. Temperatures will not be taken on premises.
    - i. If congregants need assistance with temperature taking, please contact the office during operational hours.
  - f. Volunteers have been faithful in taking attendance each Sunday. Congregants may be asked to provide additional contact information for contact tracing purposes should a Covid outbreak occur.
  - g. Pews will be roped off to help maintain proper distance. All pew materials (hymnals, bibles, envelopes, etc) have been removed until further notice.
  - h. Congregants are asked to maintain a minimum of 6 feet from others and to refrain from shaking hands, hugging, embracing, etc.
  - i. Vocal singing will be limited to worship leaders only. Congregational singing will resume when it is safe to do so.
  - j. There will be no coffee, beverages, or sharing of food in the building at this time. People may bring their own beverages with them, but beverages should be in closed containers to reduce spills.
  - k. Please reduce social time inside the building. Congregants are asked to socialize outside in open air spaces maintaining safe distances.
  - l. In order to facilitate as many worshippers as possible, worshippers will be dispersed throughout the building:
    - i. The building has the technology to deliver on-screen live worship in the fellowship hall. The nursery will not be used at this time.
    - ii. Seating will be on a first come first seated basis. When any space is filled to capacity, worshippers will flow to the additional space.
    - iii. Should there be an abundance of people in attendance (more than 50 people in the sanctuary, more than 15 in the fellowship hall), worshippers may attend service online.
    - iv. Family groups are asked to sit close together and maintain 6 feet between others family units.
  - m. Dismissal after worship should be row by row and participants are asked to use their best judgement to avoid crowding and have a spirit of cooperation when exiting.

- n. Worship bulletins will be limited but available for those who request them. Congregants are encouraged to bring their own order of worship which is available for download on mobile devices.
- o. Offering plates will not be passed around during worship. Offering plates will be placed near altar railing for collection. Congregants are encouraged to mail in offerings or give electronically.
- p. Communion will continue to be offered using individual communion sets. Additional communion sets will be made available for those who request them.
- q. The nursery will not be open at this time. Families are encouraged to worship together.

**Church Staff and Volunteers:**

The church staff has continued to work during the building closure. In many cases, staff and volunteers have had an increase in work hours. For example, those who are helping with worship have invested countless of hours of production for each Sunday online worship service.

Our office will continue flexible operational hours and will continue to be available by email. Office personnel hours of availability will be Monday-Friday 9-1pm.