
RELEASED JULY 3, 2020

Zion United Church of Christ Faithful Gathering Handbook

Our plan to faithfully gather through the COVID-19 pandemic



1 CORINTHIANS

12:24B-27

"But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the part with less honor so that there won't be division in the body and so the parts might have mutual concern for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part gets the glory, all the parts celebrate with it. You are the body of Christ and parts of each other."

Introduction

We are living in unprecedented times as the COVID-19 pandemic persists around the world. As the outbreak in the United States spread, the Zion Council decided on March 12th that for the safety of our church family, we needed to suspend in-person gatherings. Quickly, stay at home orders were put in place in order to slow the spread of this deadly virus. We immediately adjusted our ministry so that we could faithfully continue to do God's work while looking out for your well-being. Your Council has been in constant communication throughout this pandemic, discerning the best way forward for our particular church family. This document is our guide for how we will faithfully gather as this pandemic continues.

Our priority is doing God's work in ways that will help keep our church family healthy and safe.

Phase 1

Faithfully Gathering @ Home

Start Date: March 12, 2020

In this phase, all in-person gatherings are suspended and done in alternative ways @ Home. Since this pandemic hit our community, we have been doing our best to make sure that as many of our members as possible have access to worship, study, prayer, and fellowship. We knew to do so, our ministry would have to be available in many different forms.

- **Worship @ Home** - Our worship was made available via our website, social media, and email list with video and digital documents. For those without internet access, we began doing postal mailings with printed bulletins and reflection manuscripts.
- **Phone Tree** - Knowing that so many in our congregation do not have internet and computer access, we wanted to make sure everyone had some kind of opportunity to stay connected. Our Phone Tree has been a great way to stay connected and united in Christian fellowship.
- **Facebook Prayer** - Pastor Sarah began offering a time to gather for prayer through the Zion Facebook page via Facebook Live every Wednesday evening at 7:00 pm.
- **Bible Study** - Our Bible Study moved to Zoom on Monday evenings at 7:00 pm. This has been a great time to grow in our faith and to build community.
- **Financial Support** - We began bringing in our mail daily so that offering and tithe checks would be secure. We determined that the most accessible way to collect offerings online was through PayPay. We set this up as soon as possible.



Other Gatherings on Zoom

Ongoing meetings, such as Council, moved to the online platform Zoom, which allows for video meetings. We began to offer new opportunities through Zoom, like our Hymn Sing and Craft and Chat time.



Even as we stopped gathering in our buildings, Zion was never closed, because we are more than a building. Though our ministry looks different, our ministry has not been suspended, because we continue to worship, study, fellowship, and serve.

Phase 2

Faithfully Gathering @ Home and @ Zion

Start Date: July 26, 2020

In this phase we are committed to continuing to offer options for worship, study, fellowship, and prayer @ Home, while beginning to offer in-person worship @Zion in ways that are safe.

Worship

Worship is at the heart of our life together. It is when we gather to be in the presence of God and the presence of the body of Christ. In this phase, our focus is on being able to gather in-person for worship. All other gatherings will be held digitally, by phone, and by mailings.

Basic Precautions

- We will still provide Worship @ Home for those over 65, those with underlying health conditions, and those who are not ready to be out.
- We ask anyone who is sick, not feeling well, or has a temperature to join us for Worship @ Home
- We ask that everyone in attendance wear a mask at all times, practice social distancing by remaining at least six feet apart, and practice good hygiene.
- Signage will be posted throughout our buildings to remind people about social distancing and good hygiene practices.

What our worship will look like

- Move to "old summer" schedule with one service at 10:00 am in order to make cleaning after worship more manageable.
- Worship will be held outside if possible because that is the safest. If it is not possible we will gather in the gym because it provides the greatest amount of room for social distancing. Indicators will be placed where individuals and household are invited to sit.
- We invite those who are able to BYOC - bring your own chair. This will help reduce surface contact and the need for disinfecting surfaces following worship.
- We will have ushers wearing mask who can assist with social distancing, moving chairs, and finding a spot to sit.
- Research has shown that singing is a "super-spreading" activity and greatly increases the likelihood of exposure to COVID-19. It is estimated that singing increases risk of exposure by 70%. We will not be able to sing during our in-person worship, but music will be included as part of our worship for times of praise, meditation, and reflection.
- Our service will be adapted in ways that will limit potential exposure to COVID-19. Rather than using bulletins, we will have a simplified service that does not require bulletins. Bring your own Bible if you wish to follow along with the scripture reading.
- We will not have a greeting time or receiving line in order to reduce close, physical contact.
- We will limit the amount of speaking done by the congregation and will instead rely on the worship leaders for our call to worship, prayers, and readings.
- Call or email Pastor Sarah with your joys and concerns by Saturday so they may be shared publicly in worship.

What we will do if someone who attended our service tests positive for COVID-19

- If you attend worship @ Zion and then test positive for COVID-19, we ask that you notify us immediately. We will not identify you by name in order to respect your privacy, but we will need to notify those who attended the service with you.
- If we are informed that someone who attended worship tested positive for COVID-19, we will contact our local health department immediately and will follow their guidelines.
- At every service, we will keep a record of those who attended so they can be notified, if necessary, of potential exposure to COVID-19 while worshipping with us.
- If needed, we will suspend our in-person worship and return to Phase 1 with everyone invited to Worship @ Home.

Additional Phases

The Zion Council will continue to closely monitor developments in COVID-19 in our area. They will continue to prayerfully discern when the right time is for our congregation to begin gathering. Look for additional information in the future about what our next phases will look like.

Cloth Face Covering Do's & Don'ts:

DO:

- ✓ Make sure you can breathe through it
- ✓ Wear it whenever going out in public
- ✓ Make sure it covers your nose and mouth
- ✓ Wash after using

DON'T:

- ✗ Use on children under age 2
- ✗ Use surgical masks or other personal protective equipment (PPE) intended for healthcare workers

 cdc.gov/coronavirus

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS
Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.

6 ft



 cdc.gov/coronavirus