**An Updated draft of points/recommendations for reopening the Church**

**1st UCC- Carlisle**

We are called to love God with all of our heart mind and strength and love our neighbor as ourselves. With this in mind, we have an evolving plan to address face to face worship and activities in the life of the church.

1. **Worship –** When Cumberland County is firmly established in the green phase and after a period of time of adjustment for the entire county and community (Penn Central Conference recommends minimum of mid-June), the church can begin to look at conducting face-to-face worship.

**Outdoor worship** – Due to traffic noises, excessive summer heat and humidity, this is currently not an option.

**Indoor worship** – The church sanctuary is the primary location the faith congregation will use. Spacing will need to be figured out and marked. People will also need to wear masks during worship. Masks will be provided to those who do not have any. All are welcome to participate in worship but are expected to abide by the guidelines set forth by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as adopted and amended by the Consistory of the First UCC.

The Property Management Council has measured out safe seating spaces. They have determined there is a total of 91 spaces in the church (66 spaces In the ground level of the sanctuary, and 25 in the balcony. These spaces will be identified in the sanctuary by the Property Council to indicate distance of separation. Masks will be worn during worship. The masks should be in place when people entering the sanctuary

Signs and flyer on the doors, email, and social media will be used to convey to the congregation how the church is prepared for the return of the members and friends of the church. Words such as “clean, safe, and mindful of health needs and issues in preparation for a non-touch experience” or similar expressions will be used. Signs asking people if they recently had a fever, cough, chills, or other indicators of COVID-19, and if they answer yes to any of those symptoms, they are asked to consider the welfare of others and not be present and can join online instead.

It is also prudent to have a path for people to follow to enter the church, and then to leave. The intended pattern for people will be as follows:

\*Entering the church people will enter through the gray parking lot door, use the stairs/elevators, go through the Great Hall and enter into the church.

\*When it is time to leave the sanctuary, people will exit through the glass doors which lead to the plaza area (ramp is available). If people wish to use the elevator to exit the building, they will need to wait until all people have exiting through the established exit pathway.

**1a. Greeters** – There will not be any greeters present for worship during this time of transition. There will be a banner made to welcome people. Ushers will be present in the building but their primary responsibility will not necessarily to welcome people (see ushers)

**1b. Elevator use:** One family at a time should use the elevator. The buttons on the elevator will need to be kept clean for worship and special events. There will be a table in the elevator with sanitizer. After usage, an elevator passage is asked to sanitize the buttons. In order to be truly effective, the buttons will need to dry from the application of the sanitizer.

**1b. Ushers**- (masked and gloved) one usher (A) will be at the gray parking lot door to help guide people into the building and toward the sanctuary. This usher will also hand out masks to people who do not have them. If people refuse to wear mask, it will be compassionately explained to them that these are the rules the church is following. If they choose not to comply, then they are welcome watch the worship live streamed on Facebook, or as a video on Facebook, Youtube or [www.1ucc.org](http://www.1ucc.org). If they do not have any of those options, there is also the possibility to call in via uberconference and listen to the worship services. There will be another usher (B) who will also be by the parking lot door, keeping track of people entering for worship. This is to help attendance records and also comply with CDC guidelines for contact tracing. There will be a third usher (C) who will be stationed at the back of the sanctuary (the entry point into the sanctuary) and he/she will be handing out bulletins to the people entering the sanctuary. The fourth usher (D) will help people understand the concept of safe spacing and the designated seats that have been identified, and help them find designated seating. There will be a fifth usher (E) who will help seat people appropriately in the balcony.

1c. **Sanitizers** – there will be several locations where sanitizer will be stationed so that people can keep their hands clean during their time in the church.

**1d. Time of Greeting/Passing of the Peace:** this will be suspended for the time being until it is determined by Consistory and the Church and Ministry council that it is safe to resume this practice. People can stand and look around at people, but it will have to be done verbally only (waving is a possibility.) Post signs about not shaking hands and doing non-contact greetings. We will promote the hashtag #itsoktosmileandwave.

**1e. Singing: c**urrently there will not be any singing occurring during the worship time (congregational, special performers). There is higher risks with singing. Hymnals have been removed from the pews. When it is determined to be safe for singing (CDC determination, Consistory decision), Hymnals may or may not be used. Words for the hymns could also be printed in the bulletins. Or the words of the hymns could be projects onto the screen. The church has a OneLicense and this will cover the music used. There may be hymns played during the worship, but the words will not necessarily be available (again, a higher risk with singing)

**1f. Choir** will not be practicing or performing until it is determined to be safe by CDC guidelines, the Governor determinations and the Consistory decision. Higher risks with choirs and singing.

**1g. Scriptures:** the Bibles have been removed from the sanctuary for the time being. Scriptures may be read from the pulpit per the tradition of the church. Scriptures will be located within the bulletin initially. The usage of a screen will be discussed going forth in this time. Initially, the pastor will read the scriptures, but in time will transition back to involving the readers in worship.

**1h. Offertory**: the plate will not be passed. Instead there will be offering plates in the back of the sanctuary where people can place their offerings and tithes.

**1i. Blue Sheets:** there will not be blue sheets utilized for the time being. Instead there will be a clipboard in the back of the church where new address and contact information can be written down to inform the office. Also if there is pressing information to share with the office, it can be done with use of the clipboard.

**1j. Lord’s Supper/Communion** trays will not be passed for communion. There are a couple of options: A: congregants can be individually handed pre-packaged communion containers (which have grape juice and a wafer contained within it. People can step forward at the proper time (using appropriate spacing) and obtain a packet of a wafer/grape juice so that communion may be consumed together or so the Holy Spirit directs people.

1k. **Baptism** – Baptism is feasible. All family members who come forward will be masked. Social distancing needs to be acknowledged and utilized. The sponsoring elder will also be masked. The pastor will be masked and gloved. Unless the baptized is an infant, he/she/they will also be masked. The pastor will perform the sacrament of baptism within this framework.

**1l. dismissal:** the people will be dismissed by rows (back rows first), and will leave in an orderly and socially appropriate distance. People will leave out of the glass doors that lead to the plaza. Ushers can help consider an organized way to dismiss people so that social distancing is kept. If people desire to use the elevator to exit the building, they will be asked to wait until all other people have left by the established path.

**Please note**: it is also encouraged that people do not congregate in the parking or around the church following the church service. If people do, it is strongly encouraged that people continue to employ social distancing and masks.

1m. **pastor greeting at the end of worship**: the pastor/preacher will not be in the back of the sanctuary to greet people at the conclusion of the worship service. As much as the pastor would like to greet people, it seems that this behavior would ask risk to people’s health.

1. **Sterilizing the church:** the Sanctuary will need to be sterilized after each worship service and after each event. It can be done by the sextant or a group of volunteers from the church. A list of steps will be available in order to cover this step (arms of pews, backs of pews, doors knobs and handles, light switches, carpet cleaned, glass wall in the balcony)
2. **Vacation Bible School:** VBS is not to take place this summer (2020). It can be discussed for the following summer.
3. **Children’s Church** – This can continue to occur, as long as adults wear masks and safe steps are taken to care for the children and all of the adults. It might be wise to remove everything nonessential from the room to limit surfaces for potential contamination and do a thorough cleaning in between uses.
4. **Special Events –**

**5a. Funerals** while this may be a consideration, it will be better if these worship events happen during the green phase of the Pennsylvania State Plan and beyond. Otherwise the total number of people involved will have to be a fraction of who can normally attend. Masks and social distancing will need to be observed. It is a possibility to conduct funerals outside on the plaza, but social distancing will need to be observed and a limit set on how many people can be involved

**5b. Weddings –** given the weather the plaza is a good location for weddings. The total number of people involved in weddings will need to be between 25-50 (estimate due to social distancing). Social distancing will need to be practiced for all involved, and masks are also expected due to CDC guidelines.

5c. **Outreach events** – Outreach events need to be rescheduled or reconfigured to address the climate of society today. Any music events need to be scheduled. If it is to go packed meals, this is a possibility, given that masks and gloves are utilized for the servers. Any people coming to receive food will need to employ social distancing as well as a mask. In the case of an outreach event, the process should be kept outside as frequently as possible.

1. **Offering Coffee** at certain times (worship, social events). It is unadvisable to continue to have coffee available to be publicly shared. While it is great to connect and have a time of fellowship, in those situations it is very difficult to maintain acceptable social distances
2. **Virtual online worship** will continue to be available. Live streaming worship will be available on Facebook, and video recordings of the worship will be available on Facebook, 1ucc.org, and Youtube. It is recommended that this continue even after the green phase is well established, and life potentially returns to normal. Some additional audio visual equipment may need to be purchased (video camera, computer, cords, etc). Additional people may need to be identified to help with the filming and live streaming of worship
3. **Roles within the life of the church:** there are volunteer roles in a variety of setting. These will need to be reviewed when the church is opened again, in order to make sure that each person will be fulfilling his/her/their duty. Some people may be ready to come back to church right away, some people may be reluctant of just opposed to it until this is all over.
4. **Suggestion:** suspend the administrative report for the rest of 2020 (church attendance). Even when the church opens, this data will not be accurate nor useful, given that everyone will have different motivations about attending church words
5. **Councils and Committees:** groups of people who meet in the life of the church need to use the fellowship hall. More space can be provided to effectively address social distancing (rectangular tables to spread people out, to be able to keep people safe
6. **Building usage**: any groups which are approved to utilize the church space will need to covenant that they will clean and sanitize after each time they use the church facility. Groups can potentially apply to use the church space but they will have abide by the state color system as well as the CDC guidelines
7. **Social Groups, Bible Studies, Weekday worship services:** At some point in the future, it will be acceptable for groups falling under this category to utilize the church space. It is also important to note that each group which meets will need to take on the responsibility of cleaning and sanitizing after themselves
8. **Bathrooms-** Bathrooms will eb available for people to use. Signs will be posted about keep healthy and safe. The signs will also tell people to clean and sanitize all surfaces and items that they touched.
9. Sanitizer – Sanitizers will be located throughout the building. Their locations will be identified.
10. Implementation - Develop a list of procedures for your volunteers and everyone else in the church. Train as many as people as possible so that everyone is on the same page and following the same of instructions.

**Things to be worked on:**

Signs for outside doors (directing people to parking lot door for entrance to worship) (purchase)

Welcome sign in landing area (purchase)

Signs asking recent fever, chills, coughs, if so to respect and honor others (create/purchase)

Signs to direct people to sanctuary (using existing portable signs)

Signs for bathroom (sanitize everything you touch including door handle)

Locations of Sanitizers – to be determined by Property Management Council

For sanitizing the church,

A protocol will need to be in place, who is cleaning, where are the supplies