

Germantown Presbyterian Church  
September 2020

The Coronavirus Response and Recovery Task Force has been studying many procedures and guidelines produced by the Centers for Disease Control, various churches, businesses, schools, and the Shelby County Health Department. The following recommendations address worship services and group gatherings at GPC. The CDC has specific guidance for places of worship (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>) as well as other types of group gatherings, and the Shelby County and Germantown Health Departments have provided guidance on how to interpret and implement the CDC guidelines for our local setting.

Here are guidelines that GPC will follow as we gather for worship and meetings.

WORSHIP SERVICES:

- For the fall of 2020, we will have one morning worship service at 9:30 a.m. We will be able to welcome 50 persons into the sanctuary who have pre-registered through the GPC website ([www.germantownpres.org](http://www.germantownpres.org)) or by calling the church office (901 754 5195). We know that pre-registering for church is unusual, but we need an understanding of how many people to expect. Plus, we need to be able to contact everyone for “contact-tracing” in the event that someone in attendance is later diagnosed.
- Please do not attend if you feel unwell in any way, have a fever or cough, or if you or a family member who is unwell or has adverse underlying health conditions. Please take your own temperature before coming to church and stay at home if you have a fever.
- In keeping with the current Shelby County Health Department guidelines, everyone will need to wear a mask indoors. There is a widely accepted consensus in the medical community that wearing masks vastly reduces the spread of COVID-19. Out of respect and deference for others, please wear a mask. We will have masks, as well as hand-sanitizer, available at the church entrances.
- We will enter and depart the sanctuary through the Narthex (Arthur Road) doors in the rear of the sanctuary and depart in an orderly manner row by row.
- Family units will sit together in every other pew and six feet apart.
- We will not gather to socialize indoors, such as our “doughnut gathering” in Warren Hall, but we will gladly greet one another from a safe distance outside.
- We will use paper bulletins that will include all music and announcements.
- We will not pass offering plates but will invite everyone to give generously by placing their offering in the plates by the doors or to give online.
- When the new, evening worship service comes online (anticipated in September), the same guidelines will prevail. The GPC cleaning service will wipe down and sanitize the sanctuary between the services, and the pews for seating will be switched from the morning service.
- Weddings and Funeral Services will follow these same guidelines.

We regret that many in our church family may choose not to attend because they are at-risk for a variety of reasons. We grieve that not everyone can resume in-person worship. We remember with affection those who cannot attend, which is why we will have a video livestream of the service available

via our website. Our worship service can be viewed live between 9:30 and 10:30 a.m., or you may watch the replay at any time after 10:30 a.m. each Sunday.

#### CHILDREN, YOUTH, and SPECIAL NEEDS GATHERINGS (Sunday School, Youth Fellowship)

- Children:
  - Enter the Children's Area and check in with the volunteer/staff person at the Central Hallway Desk.
  - There we will have a sanitation station where we will have hand sanitizer, as well as a temperature and mask check. (We are asking that masks be worn at all times)
  - Classrooms have been made ready for social distancing.
  - We have ordered cameras to make Zoom-meeting platforms available for those who are not able to meet in person. As of September 1, this option in process, and we hope to have it up and running very soon. Please contact Anna White for the link.
  - For Children's Bells and Choirs practice, we will follow all social-distancing policies, including singing and practicing outside (weather permitting). All supplies are individually wrapped.
  
- Youth:
  - Enter youth area from the Welcome Center staircase.
  - There we will have a sanitation station where we will have hand sanitizer, as well as a temperature and mask check. (We are asking that masks be worn at all times)
  - Classrooms have been made ready for social distancing.
  - All food items (mainly Youth Fellowship dinner) will be prepackaged and individually served.
  - There is a Zoom-meeting platform now available for those who are not able to meet in person. Please contact Erin Bowden for the link.

In the event that a school or school system closes for any period of time, we may ask affected students not to attend GPC events in person during the time when their school is closed. This decision will be made by staff and church leadership, in consultation with the Coronavirus Response and Recovery Task Force. There may be extenuating circumstances that would not require a student from a closed school or system to stay away (such as if that student had been online-only in their learning plan).

#### OTHER GROUPS/MEETINGS:

- GPC is open for meetings and group gatherings, provided that masks are worn and participants follow social distancing guidelines of remaining at least six feet apart.
- All food items must be prepackaged and individually served.
- Participants in these meetings will use provided sanitizer to wipe down the surfaces of any tables used. In addition, the GPC cleaning service will clean the meeting area as needed between meetings. We may need to add increased time between meetings to accommodate our cleaning service.

If you have specific questions to ask about any area of programming, please be in touch with the leader of any program area by calling the church office at 901 754 5195.