

TOGETHER AGAIN!



Over the last few months, we have been primarily meeting using technology instead of face to face meetings. As the country begins to reopen, we believe it is time to begin offering in-person worship services again. The options that we will begin offering again will be both small group meetings and Sunday morning worship. Governor Lamont has requested by his current executive orders (7D & 7N) that places of worship keep gatherings to 50 people. Since our sanctuary is small, we will indeed limit our worship services to 50 people each but intend to provide as many services as needed. Since we have no idea how long Covid-19 will impact us, we believe that people need in-person meetings now. We are committed to keeping these meetings safe as well as providing virtual meetings until everyone is comfortable to return. Join us online Sunday for the latest update on in-person meetings.

I want to be very clear that we are NOT trying to rush anyone back. In the midst of this pandemic, meeting in person is not a matter of faith or commitment. Many of our most faithful and committed members will wait for some time to return to meeting and we applaud that. We will continue to do our best to reach people where they are including providing online services. We want to encourage our elderly, immune-compromised and caregivers to strongly consider waiting although we leave that decision completely up to you!

God is our Ultimate Protection

God is our ultimate protection. Although we will take all safety guidelines very seriously, we believe 100% that God is our protection.

*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. -
Psalm 46:1*

If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty. - Daniel 3:17

Basic Guidelines for Worship during Covid-19

Here are the basic safety guidelines we want to introduce as we plan to meet together. We will keep these in operation as long as needed so that we can provide the safest opportunity for everyone. These guidelines are subject to change depending upon the constantly changing recommendations of the CDC and State of Connecticut.

1. If you have been diagnosed or exposed to Covid-19 you must stay home. If you find out you had been exposed to covid and were currently asymptomatic, please inform us right away so we can inform those that you came in contact with. If you have a fever or any cold-like symptoms, please stay home and participate in our online services instead.

2. Masks. Initially everyone will be encouraged to wear a face covering. Exceptions are made for individuals who have trouble breathing and children ages 2 and under. Pastor Pat and the musicians will not be wearing coverings on stage; they will be the rest of the morning. To some this will feel like an extreme measure, but we believe it is important that we do our best to protect everyone that comes.

3. Hand Washing & Hand Sanitizing. We ask that you use hand sanitizer as you enter and exit the building. We will have hand sanitizing stations available but it is also recommended that if you have personal sized bottles you bring them with you. Remember not to touch your face, nose, or mouth. It is allergy season so if you have to cough or sneeze we understand that but please make sure it is covered and that you sanitize right away.

4. A Safe and Clean Facility. Our goal is to be clean, safe, and mindful of germs. Initially we will only meet in the Worship Center and all doors except the bathrooms will be locked in in the Ministry Center. All chairs, highly touched surfaces, and bathrooms will be sanitized before every gathering. Rows have been removed to create safe spacing and a four chair gap will need to be maintained to keep a 6 feet distance between families. Each row can provide seats for between 2 and 8 people depending upon family size. We will provide as many services as needed but may require advanced reservations and assigned seating to ensure safe spacing. As much as possible, doors will be propped open to facilitate a no-touch experience. Windows and doors will be opened as much as possible to create an airflow through the room.

5. Children must stay with their parents. Initially we will not be operating a kids' church or nursery so your children will need to remain with you at all times. We will restart these ministries after we get a better handle on how to safely do this.

6. Touch Free. Initially there will be no bulletins. Offerings will be received as you exit the room. When we celebrate communion, we will use prepackaged communion elements that are placed on the seats in sealed bags before you enter.

7. No Refreshments Served. Initially no food or beverages will be served. You are welcome to bring your own coffee, tea or bottled water to the church with you. No water fountain will be available for use at the church.

8. No Handshakes or Hugs. Everyone is encouraged not to shake hands or hug while greeting one another. This is probably the hardest part, but for now our very presence, smiles and greetings will have to do.

The church has been awesome through this difficult time and it will be even better as we begin to meet in person! Watch your email for how to make in-person reservations or go to our website for the latest info. www.ashfordchurch.org/backtochurch

Also, if there is anything you need, even if it is just a friendly voice, let us know! This has been a huge challenge in every way and we are in it together! We need one another now more than ever and if meeting together means by phone and internet, we want to excel in that!

And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. - Hebrews 10:25

God Bless

Pastor Pat McCue, John McCormick, Chuck Shamback.

P.S. Warmer days are in the near future and we are preparing for a possible outdoor service option. Give us feedback if this is something you would be excited about.