



Plans for Future Reopening of Our Church

Dear Siblings in Christ,

“Love your neighbor, God can help.” These words, inspired by Matthew 22:39 describe the conviction of the Reopening Task Force (RTF) and Session, as we have carefully considered how our church might faithfully resume in-person worship and church activities amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. While RTF members are aware of churches who have already begun in-person worship services, information from national, state, and local resources, including communication with leaders of other nearby large PC(USA) congregations, guides us to be cautious in our care for the safety and wellbeing of our members and visitors.

Session has approved a reopening plan connected to the levels on the Ohio Public Health Advisory System. You may recognize that Cuyahoga County is at level 3 out of 4, described as “Very high exposure and spread. Limit activities as much as possible.” Know that Covenant’s leadership looks forward eagerly to the county’s statistics of infection and hospital/ICU admissions shrinking back to level 2, when outdoor worship may resume, and to level 1, when we may be able to gather again in our beautiful sanctuary.

At the end of this letter, you will see a summary of the reopening plan for returning to in-person worship and small-scale church events. A few general remarks can be made that apply to our existing plan:

- We continue to celebrate Covenant community through remote worship services and Zoom fellowship gatherings. Church staff continue to work with members to provide spiritual and emotional care. Church leadership and staff have begun working together to begin video worship services in the near future and to bring video ministry to our church.
- The building remains closed to the public. Staff and service personnel working in the building observe social distancing and wear masks. Wearing face masks is a great way to show your love for your neighbors, since they are worn to for the protection of others.
- Our custodians continue to clean and disinfect the sanctuary and other building spaces, in anticipation for the time when we can gather in-person again. Building and Grounds has developed a sanctuary seating plan that will help us observe appropriate social distancing the next time we are in that space.

Church leadership recognizes that we may make mistakes along the way and there will surely be awkward moments as we adjust to new protocols and practices. There will be times of frustration, disappointment, and grief. There will also be blessings, wonderful surprises, great celebrations, and moments of deep satisfaction. May we savor the spiritual gifts of love, joy, peace, generosity, and faithfulness along the journey. Your church leadership asks for continued prayers, patience, and support as we move forward, together.

In Christ’s Mission and Ministry,

Reopening Task Force, on behalf of Session

Fred Braun (Building & Grounds), Elder Barb Clint,
Elder Matthew Garrett, Elder Sybil Marsh, Deacon Erin Tomko

Covenant Community Plan for Returning to In-Person Worship & Small-Scale Church Events

STAGE ONE (current stage)

Session approved reopening considerations for in-person worship and small-scale church events only in "Stage One."

Session will review all other events with the appropriate parties on a case-by-case basis (e.g. memorial service, wedding).

Ohio PHAS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Risk Description	Increased exposure and spread. Exercise high degree of caution. Follow all current health orders.	Very high exposure and spread. Limit activities as much as possible. Follow all current health orders.	Very high exposure and spread. Limit activities as much as possible. Follow all current health orders.	Severe exposure and spread. Only leave home for supplies and services. Follow all current health orders.
Covenant REOPENING STAGE	Limited Building Access & Limited Capacity in Building	Outdoor Gatherings + Limited Building Access	Building closed	Building closed
STAGE 1	➤ Public building access limited to sanctuary & narthex	➤ Public building access limited to narthex restroom	➤ Building access limited to authorized personnel	

STAGE ONE (current stage)

- As of this writing, Cuyahoga county is at **Level 3** on the OH Public Health Advisory System. You can monitor county levels on this website: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/public-health-advisory-system>
- **Worship** while we are at **Level 3** will continue remotely.
- When Cuyahoga county drops to **Level 2**, we will begin offering outdoor worship service, weather permitting, with social distancing and mask wearing.
- When Cuyahoga county drops to **Level 1**, we will begin offering indoor worship service with social distancing and mask wearing.
- RTF and Session will review, revise, and adjust plans as information and circumstances require.

STAGE TWO

- The RTF will continue to monitor pandemic conditions and health & safety information. As new information becomes available, we will share updates with Session.