

# RE-OPENING GUIDELINES FOR IN-SANCTUARY SERVICES

Middletown Christian Church, Disciples of Christ

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“Living out the love of Christ and embracing people where they are.”

## Background

This document is the culmination of work done by staff in consultation with the Healthy at Church committee and counsel of the Middletown Christian Church Board. It is a plan on how we might be able to re-enter the church for worship this Fall. I hope you will take the time to look through this plan since it will help you understand not only some of the work it took to get us to this point, but also what you can expect when you come to worship in church while Covid-19 is still an active presence in our community.

MCC held its last in-house worship on March 8, 2020. This change followed the departure of our Senior Minister and during the planning and implementation of Lent and Holy Week services. The staff had to quickly put together a plan for online worship and begin to operate without a Senior Minister in place.

In response to Covid-19, the Board appointed the Healthy at Church Advisory Team to offer guidance and to make recommendations to staff as they determined the best way and the right time to begin the process of opening the church campus again. The team met for the first time on May 5, 2020. The first meeting laid out potential issues and details of planning that would be required to re-open the church in measured, phased steps

On June 15, groups of 10 or less were permitted on church grounds under conditions outlined by staff in consultation with the Advisory Team. On July 1, groups of 50 or less were invited to have meetings on the church grounds. Later in July, we had to step back and limit groups of 10 or less on the grounds because of a change in state guidelines. All of this was done to meet state recommendations, which has been our principle resource.

During this time staff have been diligently working to prepare the church for re-entry, enhance our worship experience and communication process to the church community, and been involved in regular discussions about what would be required for in-church worship again.

Over these many weeks, the Advisory Team had 10 meetings, addressed communications to the congregation, and provided criteria for the best approach to keep everyone safe and healthy. The Ministry Team joined with the Advisory Team over the last month as we began to develop this plan that you now have before you.

Throughout this process our main objective is to provide a safe and healthy worship experience for all our members, visitors, staff, and vendors.

Many of you asked why this process has taken so long as other congregations have already resumed services. We are fully aware of decisions other churches have made and have been in regular contact with many of them throughout the state. Several are like us, watching and waiting for the best time to reopen while minimizing the risk to our congregation. We have been moving forward with deliberate and thoughtful steps because your safety is of ultimate importance to all of us.

Many churches have opened and closed, some have defied state orders, and too many have become identified contact points for Covid-19. As we all know, things change daily, and while we are not trying to be reactionary, we are trying to be sensitive to what we are hearing. We also are hearing from you as many have contacted the staff directly or filled out our questionnaire. We are listening and we are honoring what you are saying to us.

## Background Continued

This plan was put together by Tracey Spann and members of our staff, with significant input from members of the identified Mitigation Team. My thanks to Tracey for her excellent work on creating the original document that has now been reviewed and amended by staff, the Advisory Team, and our Board. It is a well thought out and detailed plan which has been and will be our guide moving forward.

The Mitigation Team will administer this plan, and the Healthy at Church Team and Board will continue to advise and counsel as we move towards an opening date.

Please note, while this plan does include a re-opening date, we are still subject to the standards developed by the state of Kentucky based upon the recommendations from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The re-opening plan follows the statutes, current executive orders, regulations, guidelines, and recommendations from Kentucky Cabinet for Health & Family Services (CHFS), and Department for Public Health. We are also following criteria recommended from our Healthy at Church Advisory Team, which is included in this plan. We invite you to follow along with us during our several week process, using these guidelines, to understand the choices we will make regarding this planned re-opening and whether it will be safe to do so.

Please pray for and support your church during this time. Also offer prayers for our Mitigation Team headed by Tracey Spann and includes Jeff Wellkamp, George Irvin, Sr., Larry Vallon, Miriam George, and Jim Mallory. These are the people who have been working and will continue to work towards our re-opening.

Also, I offer thanks to the hard work and continuing efforts of our Healthy at Church Advisory Team under the capable leadership of Pam Hagan. Team members are Lynn Harrelson, Kelli Miller, Richard Ivey, Holly Morris, and Steve Richards. This team will continue to work side by side with staff as we move through this process.

Please take the time to read through this document as it will give you step by step instructions on how you can prepare to join your Middletown community in worship this Fall. More information will follow as we draw closer to our anticipated opening.

Thank you for your patience and for helping our church remain a safe place for our church community as we begin the next chapter of our journey together.

Blessings,

Doug Lofton  
Interim Senior Minister

## Expectations for Attending In-Sanctuary Services

All persons must register online or by phone.

All persons must wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth at all times.

If you have a disability that prevents you from wearing a mask for extended periods, please indicate on your registration form.

In the event you forget your mask, masks will be available. If you pull your mask down below your mouth, expect to be asked to return your mask to cover your mouth and nose.

Proper social distancing will be required in all areas.

When preparing to enter the building, markings will be on the pavement and the main foyer floor to indicate proper social distancing.

Prior to leaving your home, please scan/take your temperature to ensure it is not elevated.

Temperature will be scanned as you enter the building. If temperature reads 99.7 or higher, we will ask you to vacate the building. If temperature is reading high due to exposure to outside elements, person will remain inside for 3-5 minutes to allow the body to adjust. Rescan will take place and person will be allowed to remain if scan reads below 99.7.

Touchless hand sanitizing stations will be available in multiple areas, including the main foyer & restrooms.

Communion will be available to each individual person. We will offer regular & gluten-free.

Absolutely no food or drink allowed in the building. No Hospitality. No access to water fountains.

Sanctuary Ushers will escort you to your seat.

Sanctuary Ushers will dismiss by sections/rows.

You will enter and exit the same doors.

Restrooms will be open and available before, during, or after service.

Thank you for understanding the expectations of returning to in-sanctuary service. If you have additional questions please contact the Mitigation Team at [MitigationTeam@MiddletownChristian.org](mailto:MitigationTeam@MiddletownChristian.org). We look forward to seeing you again soon.

## Registration

To provide a safe and healthy worship experience Middletown Christian Church must be prepared for the number of persons who enter the building. To ensure we have an accurate count and list of persons attending, Middletown Christian Church will require all persons to register for In-Sanctuary Services. By requiring all persons to register for each service, we can adequately prepare the building and volunteers. This process will also provide accurate numbers for sanctuary seating, thus ensuring no person will be turned away due to lack of seating.

Middletown Christian Church will offer two registration options:

1) **Online Registration**, this will be the preferred method of registration. This option will allow a person to register him/herself and their immediately family only. \*For purposes of this mitigation plan, immediate family is defined as persons living in the same household.

2) **Phone-In Registration**, this method will be available, but is not the primary method. A designated phone number will advertised/promoted for those who do not use a computer. The designated phone number is 502.400.1572 (recorded registrations are time-stamped to ensure compliance). This is a direct dial line to The Director of Newcomer Relations, also a member of the Mitigation Team. The Director of Newcomer Relations will be responsible for maintaining the Phone-In Registrations. Phone-In registrations will be added to the online registration list as they are received to ensure all persons are accounted for on Sunday mornings.

Online & Phone-In Registration will require the following information:

- First & Last name
- Email address & Phone number
- Total number attending (drop down)
- Names of immediately family attending (this will correlate with total number attending)
- Regular communion or gluten-free communions (drop down)
- Member/regular attender or first-time guest (drop-down)

After registration has been completed and submitted a confirmation email will automatically generate & be sent to registrant. Phone-in registration will receive the same information via voice-to-voice.

Confirmation email and phone call will contain the following information:

- Date & time of service
- PPE requirements
- Instructions for Sunday morning (parking, check-in, seating & dismissal)
- Instructions if you cannot attend or if you change your name

Both registration options will open each Sunday at 12 p.m. and close on Thursdays at 12 p.m. This process will allow the Mitigation Team time to review and confirm compliance with all individuals/families who registered to attend. Each Thursday after registration closes, registrations will be reviewed to ensure compliance. In the event registration compliance is not followed, the Team Lead will contact the registrant to discuss options. The options will depend on the situation. Registrations will be divided into four groups: Singles, Doubles, Families of 3, and Families of 4 or more.

## Parking & Entering the Building

Each Sunday morning, Middletown Christian Church will provide two to four Parking Lot volunteers in the parking lot to assist in reinforcing the Parking Protocols.

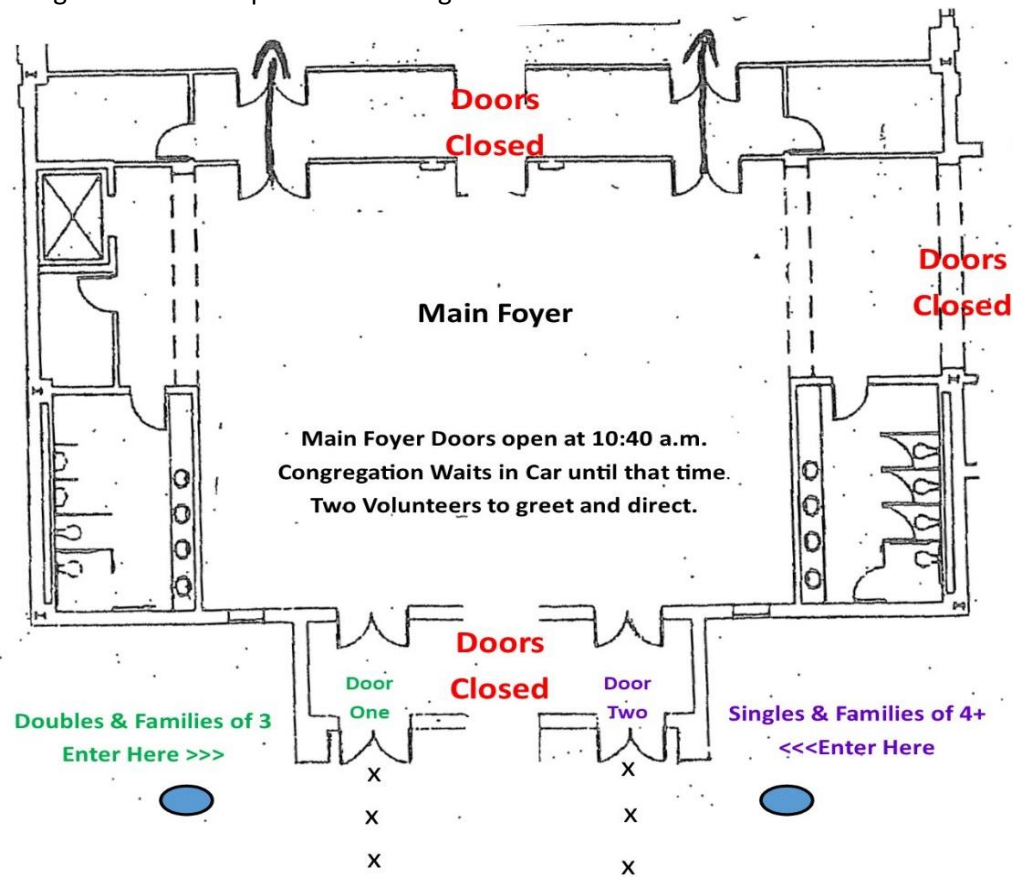
Parking Protocol at Middletown Christian Church for Sunday morning In-Sanctuary Services:

- Park every other spot.
- Persons will remain in their automobile until 10:40 a.m.
- At 10:40 a.m. persons will be permitted to exit their automobiles and proceed to the building.

As persons approach the building, designated six feet waiting areas will be clearly marked on the pavement to ensure proper social distancing. Middletown Christian Church will provide two Outside Greeter volunteers to assist with directions, entering the building, and addressing questions.

Persons will enter through the Main Foyer doors only, no exceptions. To assist with keeping our congregants safe and healthy, far-end doors entering the building will be propped open. The center doors will remain closed to stay in compliance with social distancing guidelines.

Entrance to the building will occur through the left door (identified as door one) and right door (identified as door two). Door One will be designated for Doubles & Families of 3 and Door Two will be designated for Singles & Families of 4 or More. Signs will be placed outside the Main Foyer doors to identify each entrance. Additionally, the Outside Greeter volunteers (identified as blue dots) will be positioned to greet and direct persons entering Middletown Christian Church.



## Check-In Table & Communion Table

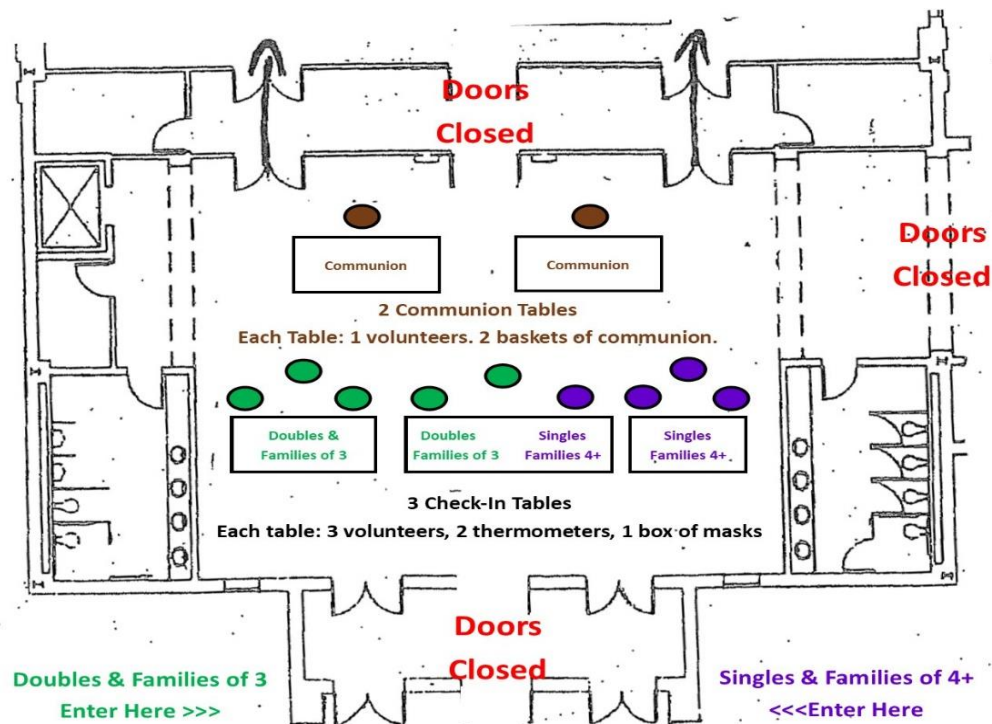
Each party will check-in as they enter the Main Foyer of Middletown Christian Church. Check-In Tables will be arranged to ensure proper social distancing. Each check-in table will have the following:

- Four volunteers
  - Two volunteers will check-in all parties entering the building.
  - Two volunteers will scan each person with a touchless thermometer.
- Two touchless thermometers, two boxes of masks, one container of antibacterial wipes

Check-in volunteers will verify all persons entering the building have the proper PPE, specifically a mask that covers the nose and mouth. If they do not have a mask, one will be provided. Masks are required to enter the building and to attend in-sanctuary services. After check-in parties will continue to communion table.

Middletown Christian Church will provide communion for in-sanctuary services. Communion will be available to all persons who choose to participate. Communion will be provided to each individual person.

Two communion tables will be accessible following check-in. Each communion table will have one volunteer and two baskets of packaged communion. Each communion bag will include a single communion and small napkin. Regular and gluten-free communion will be offered. White color bag will identify regular communion and kraft color bag will identify gluten-free communion. Two hand sanitizing stations will be positioned at each communion table, one on each side. Persons will enter the sanctuary after collecting communion.



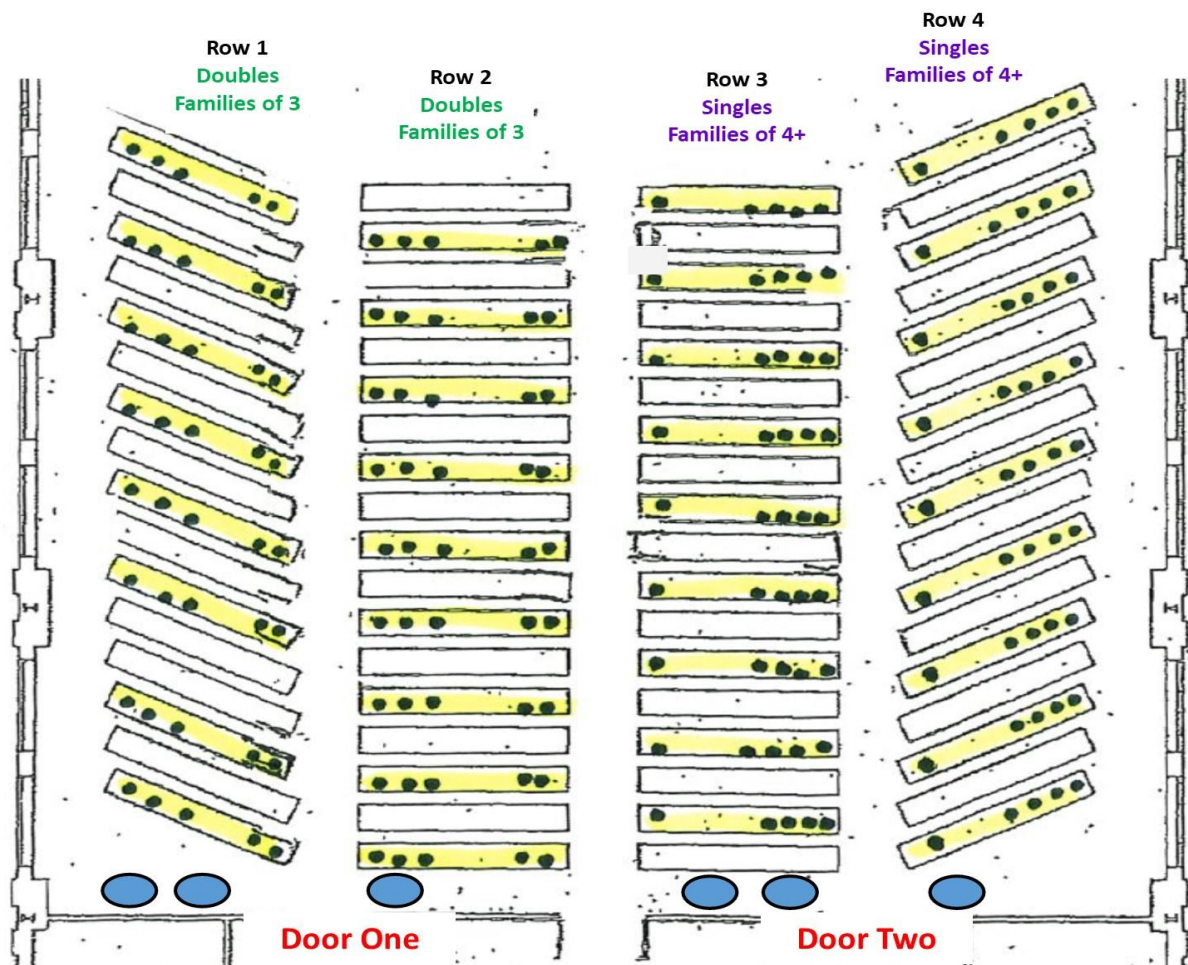
## Sanctuary Seating

To assist with keeping our congregants safe and healthy, far-end doors entering the sanctuary will be propped open. The center doors will remain closed to stay in compliance with social distancing guidelines. Congregants will enter through the two side doors, identified as Door One and Door Two. Door One is designated for Doubles & Families of Three and Door Two is designated for Singles & Families of Four or more.

Middletown Christian Church will have three Sanctuary Ushers stationed inside Door One & Door Two, for a total of 6 Sanctuary Ushers. Sanctuary Ushers inside Door One will seat Doubles & Families of Three. Sanctuary Ushers inside Door Two will seat Singles & Families of Four or more. Seating will be fluid each week. Depending on number of reservations received each week will determine exact seating.

To ensure Middletown Christian Church is following proper social distancing guidelines all persons will be seated from the front of the sanctuary to the back of the sanctuary. Seat selection will not be permitted at this time. No exceptions to this rule except in the event of adhering to ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Guidelines.

Once seated all persons will remain in their seats, except in the event a person becomes ill or needs to visit the restroom. Masks covering the mouth and nose must be worn all at times.





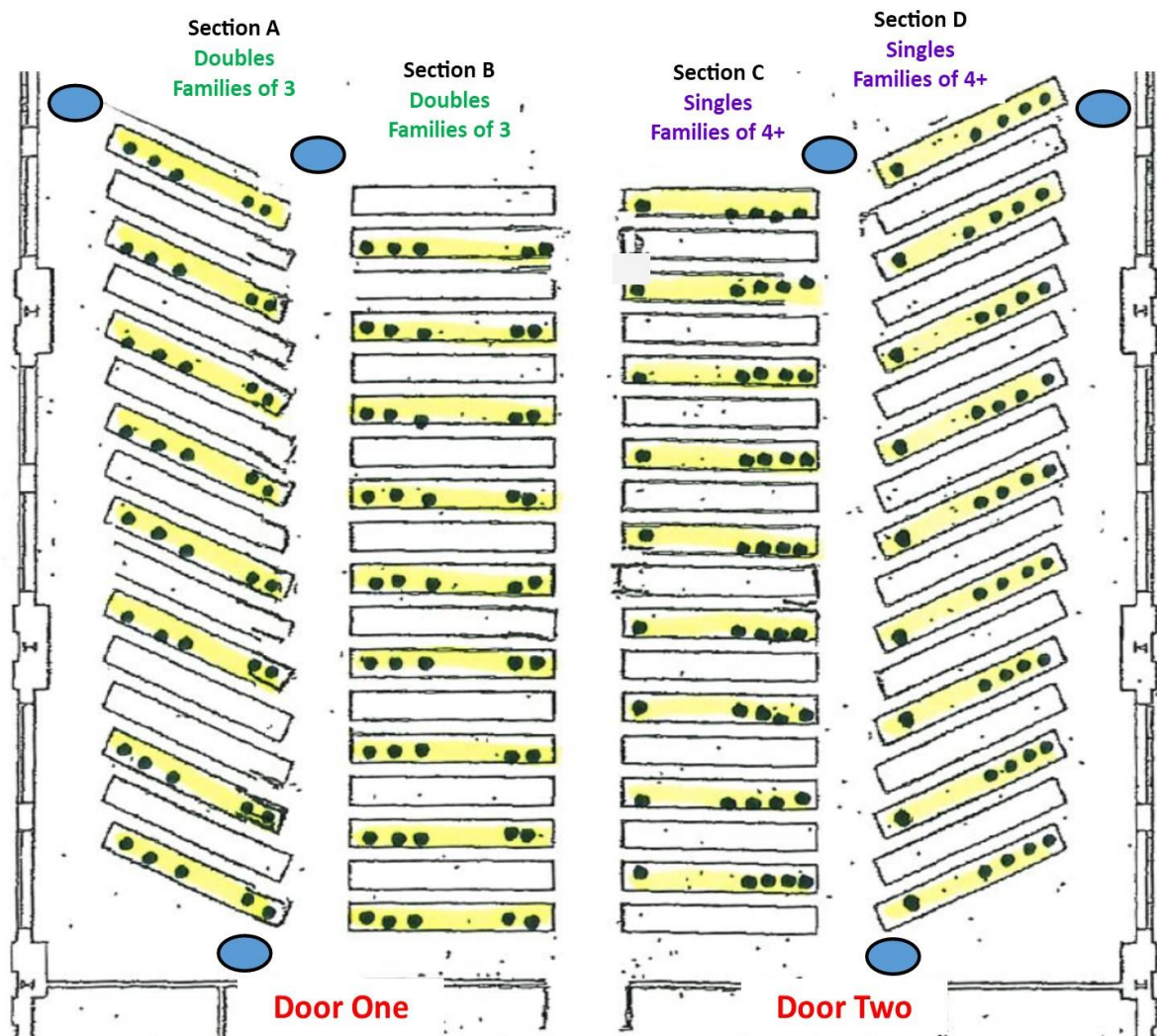
## Sanctuary Dismissal & Communion Disposal

At the end of each service Middletown Christian Church will provide dismissal instructions. Instructions must remain consistent each week. Persons will be dismissed from the back of the sanctuary to the front of the sanctuary. No exceptions to this rule, except when adhering to ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Guidelines.

Sanctuary Ushers will be stationed at each section. We have 4 sections (A, B, C, & D). Sections A & B are identified as Doubles & Families of Three. Sections C & D are identified as Singles & Families of Four or more. Each group will exit the same doors they entered the sanctuary and the Main Foyer.

One Sanctuary Usher will be stationed at each door (Door One & Door Two) to ensure persons dispose of communion bags and offer a word of thanks for attending.

Offering can be collected as congregants exit. Baskets will be on stands to ensure contactless collection is available. Offering baskets will be collected and offering will be placed in drop-box in church office.



## An Example of a Service in the Sanctuary...

10:40 a.m. – Congregants begin exiting cars and entering building for check-in

11:00 a.m. – Service begins

Welcome & Announcements (video)

Music\*

Generosity Moment (video)

Reading of Scripture\*

Sermon

Music\*

Communion

Closing prayer

11:40 - Dismissal instructions

*\*may be a video or live (Music will be instrumental if live. No singing in the sanctuary.)*

## Re-Open Date & Criteria to Re-Open

Initially, Middletown Christian Church will offer one In-Sanctuary Service at 11 a.m. on Sunday mornings.  
Current scheduled Re-Open date:

- Sunday, October 11, 2020 at 11 a.m.

Criteria to Re-Open:

If one of the following indicators occurs prior to October 11, 2020 the Healthy at Church Advisory Team will be consulted to assist the Mitigation Team in determining if we can move forward with re-opening. If two or more indicators occur the re-opening will be postponed until measures return to acceptable levels:

- Test positive percentage over 5% (<https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19>)
- Government recommendation of suspension of church services (<https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19>)
- 14-day upward trend on new cases occurs (<https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/testing/individual-states/kentucky>)

## Clean-Up & Disinfection Protocol

Middletown Christian Church is dedicated to mitigating the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our church building, workplaces, and communities. We have invested in three \*EPIX360 electromagnetic disinfectant sprayers. These sprayers will allow us to disinfect all surfaces safely and without compromising the integrity of surfaces in the sanctuary.

\*The EPIX360 is the most effective handheld disinfectant sprayer in the world. This cordless electrostatic sprayer is powerful, durable, and provides breakthrough application performance – more coverage, less waste, and better results. The EPIX360 uses a water-soluble disinfectant that provides a uniform and wraparound layer of germ-killing power. Because the EPIX360 has advanced technology, grounding is never an issue. The EPIX360 works flawlessly and consistently, greatly improving transfer efficiency and avoiding shock and electrical hazards.

Once all persons have exited the sanctuary, the sanctuary will be cleaned and disinfected. The cleaning team will be required to wear gloves and masks that cover the mouth and nose. The protocol for cleaning the pews is to sanitize from front rows to back rows to ensure cross-contamination does not occur. The following areas will be clean & sanitized after each service:

- Sanctuary: all pews & chairs, microphones, doorknobs, doors, piano, podium, music stands, trash receptacles, sound board & computer
- Main Foyer: doors, doorknobs, handles, light switches, countertops, trash receptacles, touchless hand sanitizer machines
- Bathrooms: floors, sinks, toilets, faucets, light switches, door handles, doors, trash receptacles

All PPE (personal protective equipment) and thermometers will be collected, cleaned & disinfected, and stored in closed containers until the following Sunday. Communion will be collected and stored in closed containers. Communion trash will be removed from trash receptacles and disposed of immediately following each service to ensure the safety of all persons in the building.

All outside directional signage will be moved inside. All inside signage, check-in tables, touchless hand sanitizers, and communion tables will remain in place.