

COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN

First Presbyterian Church **Dubuque, IA**

The Session of First Presbyterian Church joins with the congregation in a longing for the sharing of in-person fellowship and public worship. Our church family is a gift from God which we treasure dearly, and we must treat it as such by proceeding into the resumption of worship with an abundance of caution. Walking a balance between population health and individual liberties is always a challenge.

Though in the beginning, we all held images in our minds of returning to church all at once in celebration, we now recognize that returning to in-person fellowship and public worship will need to happen in stages, and will likely not occur in a linear fashion, but one that adjusts depending on the status of COVID-19 in our area.

Therefore, the Session developed this “COVID-19 Response Plan” to guide us through the phases as a unified body of Christ. Our hope is that by outlining standards for gathering together, we will all be empowered to move forward, bringing glory to God, and caring for one another spiritually and physically.

The following stages will be entered based on 14-day positivity rates of COVID-19 in Dubuque County. The Iowa Department of Public Health COVID-19 statistics found at <https://www.cityofdubuque.org/2831/Local-COVID-19-Updates> will be reviewed each Monday, and used to determine if/when movement between stages is appropriate. You may check for the posted “stage” on Tuesdays at <http://www.firstpresdbq.org/>, by clicking on the red square, “COVID-19 Update.”

Stage 1 - Enter when the 14-day positivity rate of COVID-19 in Dubuque County is 10% or higher.

1. Church office - CLOSED

- Staff work primarily from home. If they must be in office:
 - Masks (covering mouth and nose) required to be worn at all times in the building, unless in an office with the door closed
 - Staff who use the office will be responsible for cleaning the spaces they utilized with alcohol-based cleaning wipes provided by the church before and after use

2. Church activities - GROUPS OF 10 OR FEWER

- Priority will be given to holding church activities online
- If necessary, a church activity may be held with fewer than 10 people with the understanding the following protocols will be strictly adhered to:
 - Masks (covering mouth and nose) required to be worn at all times
 - Social distancing of 6 feet or greater will be practiced
 - Food will not be served
 - Attendance will be taken to assist in the event contact tracing is necessary
 - Participants will be responsible for cleaning the spaces they utilized with alcohol-based cleaning wipes provided by the church before and after use

- Session will consider the following activities on a case by case basis: outdoor gatherings of more than 10 people, installations/ordinations, baptisms, funerals, weddings
- Those attending understand the inherent risk of their participation in activities

3. Corporate Worship - ONLINE ONLY

- Participation on-site at FPC limited to worship leaders (12 or fewer)
- Worship leaders will strategically position themselves to minimize the possibility of transmission
- Those participating on-site at FPC will:
 - Wear a mask (covering mouth and nose) at all times when not public-speaking or leading singing
 - Take their temperatures before coming to church. If their temperature is 100.4 degrees or higher, they will stay home
 - Stay home if they feel ill, have a cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and/or diarrhea; or if they have been asked to self-isolate due to exposure to a positive case of coronavirus

4. Other considerations

- The Personnel Committee will ensure increased cleaning protocols to reduce risk are instituted
- Church will provide in the office, basement, and sanctuary:
 - Disposable masks (for those who don't bring their own)
 - Latex-free gloves
 - Hand-sanitizer
 - Thermometer (office entrance ONLY)
 - Alcohol-based cleaning wipes for surfaces

Stage 2 - Enter when the 14-day positivity rate of COVID-19 in Dubuque County is less than 10% for at least two consecutive weeks.

1. Church Office - OPEN

- Staff work primarily from the office. Work-from-home may be approved on a case by case basis in coordination with the Personnel Committee
 - Masks (covering mouth and nose) required to be worn at all times in the building, unless in an office with the door closed
 - Social distancing of 6 feet or greater will be practiced
 - Staff will be responsible for cleaning the spaces they (or their visitors) utilized with alcohol-based cleaning wipes provided by the church before and after use
 - Professional cleaning services will clean staff office spaces

2. Church activities - GROUPS OF 15 OR FEWER

- Groups will make every effort to meet online, in the church basement or outdoors with the understanding the in-person following protocols will be strictly adhered to:
 - Masks (covering mouth and nose) required to be worn at all times
 - Social distancing of 6 feet or greater will be practiced
 - Food will not be served
 - Attendance will be taken to assist in the event contact tracing is necessary
 - Participants will be responsible for cleaning the spaces they utilized with alcohol-based cleaning wipes provided by the church before and after use
- Session will consider the following activities on a case by case basis: outdoor gatherings of more than 15 people, installations/ordinations, baptisms, funerals, weddings
- Those attending understand the inherent risk to their participation in activities

3. Corporate Worship - ONLINE ONLY, SAME AS STAGE 1

4. Other considerations - SAME AS STAGE 1

Stage 3 - Enter if the 14-day positivity rate of COVID-19 in Dubuque County is 5% or less for at least two consecutive weeks.

1. Church Office - SAME AS STAGE 2

- All staff will return to the physical church office for work

2. Church activities - SAME AS STAGE 2

3. Corporate Worship

- Extended to include additional worshippers with reservations to guarantee enough space for distancing
- Individuals and families will have the opportunity to reserve space to attend worship (on or before Thursdays) and have nursery care provided. A system for reserving space to attend worship will be solidified by the Session prior to re-opening for public worship.
- Those in high-risk categories or have mixed feelings about attending worship are encouraged to continue worshipping online
- Masks will be worn at all times over nose and mouth, and 6-ft social distancing observed unless in a family unit
- Attendees may participate in corporate prayer and singing as long as their mask covers nose and mouth
- No Coffee Hour will be held, and socializing should be prioritized for outdoors

4. Other considerations - SAME AS STAGE 2

- In the event a spike in positivity rates causes the sudden need to revert backwards to a prior stage, this will be clearly communicated in multiple formats.

- Sanctuary will be regularly cleaned
- If protocols are not being followed, or if new information emerges regarding the safety of gathering, the Session may need to implement a return to online worship only.

Stage 4

This stage would mean essentially returning to pre-COVID-19 style of church function. It will only be implemented if the Session determines, in consultation with CDC and the local health department, that underlying risks are significantly reduced or eliminated such as the development of a cure or an effective vaccine.