

**SPECIAL CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING  
ST. PAUL'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH & WESLEY FOUNDATION  
May 28, 2020**

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Voting Members:** Jack Basiago, Sam Bonsall, Rebecca Connelly, Dave Flick, Kelly Grimes, Jane Harris, Scarlett Miller, Phil Mohr, Al Stewart, Darrin Thornton

**Non-voting Members:** Becky McGee, Greg Milinovich, Sarah Voigt

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

**REOPENING CHURCH FACILITIES:**

The purpose of the special meeting was to discuss options for reopening our church facilities once Centre County is moved to the Green Phase of the state's COVID-19 Response Plan.

Prior to the meeting, G. Milinovich shared a document that was provided to all local churches by the Annual Conference to help guide the decision-making process (copy attached).

G. Milinovich noted the following:

- The goal of today's meeting is to set up a process for developing a plan to move forward – not to address all of the specifics listed in the document.
- Based on the feedback he has received so far, the congregation understands the need to keep our facilities closed.
- The worship experience will be very different when we first reopen – it will not be “worship-as-usual.”
- We should not rush into reopening but rather should approach it cautiously. Pastors at some of the other downtown churches have told him they are not planning to hold services for at least another 6 to 8 weeks.

G. Milinovich opened the floor to discussion. Topics raised/discussed included the following:

- Masks should be required to be worn by everyone. We will need to have a supply of masks on hand for anyone who shows up without one. How will we handle someone who refuses to wear a mask for other than health reasons?
- How much custodial support will be needed to meet the CDC cleaning guidelines? What additional costs will be incurred? Will that limit the building use?
- Given social distancing guidelines, what's the seating capacity in the sanctuary? How will we accommodate anyone who shows up after that capacity is reached?

- Will we allow outside groups to use the building or do we limit the building use to St. Paul's groups only? Do we rely on groups to follow CDC cleaning guidelines at the conclusion of their meetings or will additional custodial support be needed?
- How will we control traffic within the building, e.g., at entrances/exits and on stairways, while maintaining social distancing?

S. Miller reported that the Preschool would be reopening on June 15 with about 10 students. The staff has reviewed the CDC guidelines and is confident that they will be able to follow the required protocols.

S. Voigt reported that she will be meeting with Abba Java staff soon to formulate a plan for reopening the coffee house. G. Milinovich recommended that she include Ken Musser in the discussion so he is aware of their custodial needs.

**NEXT STEPS:**

B. McGee proposed that Council be divided into subcommittees, each of which would focus on recommendations for a specific area of reopening. The following subcommittees were established:

- **Worship:** J. Basiago; D. Flick; A. Grandey; G. Milinovich; A. Stewart
- **Preschool/Sunday School/Small Groups:** J. Harris; B. McGee; S. Miller; P. Mohr
- **Building/Sanitation:** S. Bonsall; R. Connelly; K. Grimes; D. Thornton; S. Voigt

Subcommittees will report back to Council at a meeting to be scheduled by G. Milinovich on or about June 11.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jane Harris, Church Council Secretary

## Church Reopening Guidelines During COVID-19 Pandemic: **Green Phase**

### What Can My Church Do in the Green Phase?

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania established a three-phase process toward the reopening of businesses and nonprofits: red, yellow, and green.

The Green Phase does not mean “full speed ahead.” This phase has some specific restrictions, because the risks of transmitting COVID-19 remain.

#### In Preparation:

- Establish a task force to develop a plan.
- Research federal, state, and local guidance.
- Consider transitioning in phases. Church activities can be resumed more gradually than the state phases require. Gradual reopening can further slow the spread of the virus.
- Determine which ministry and missions are essential, and whether these can be offered safely and while using the best safety practices.
- Create a plan with clear steps.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched services and shared items. Find guidelines here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- Be sure to communicate the plan *frequently* to worshipers, staff, and those who use the building.
- Find additional important considerations here: [susum.org/covid-19](https://susum.org/covid-19)

#### In Gathered Worship:

- Limit gatherings (worship, fellowship, and other) to 250 people.
- Maintain six-foot distances between each person. This includes bathrooms and hallways. Mark off space in the pews using ropes, ribbons, painter’s tape, or other methods, if that will help. If you have moveable chairs in the sanctuary, arrange those carefully.
- Thoroughly clean after each service. See above link to CDC guidelines.
- Require all worshipers (over age two) and leaders to wear face coverings.
- Make worship child-and-family friendly rather than offer nursery service.
- Worship leaders should wash their hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Provide no-touch trash cans.
- Avoid using items that many people will touch, such as hymnals, bulletins, Bibles, and offering plates. Project the service content or guide the congregation while leading. Invite people to drop their tithes and offerings into a large basket that you provide.
- Forego singing at this time. The virus is spread through droplets that can be generated when speaking, singing, coughing, and sneezing.

- There is no safe means of offering communion at this time.
- Invite passing the peace and greetings in ways that do not entail touching. Bowing or waving are a couple of alternatives.
- Post signs to remind people of these measures to avoid transmission of the virus. Find printable “signs and messages” from the CDC here:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>
- Continue to offer online services, if possible. This enables people in high-risk categories to participate more safely. Encourage older adults and people with chronic medical conditions to avoid entering the church building for gatherings.

### In General:

- Require groups that use your building to follow these practices.
- Staff should continue to work from home whenever possible.
- Use the [CDC cleaning processes for offices and work rooms](#).
- Discourage walk-in visitors. Ask people to make appointments. Some of these may be held more safely out-of-doors. Socially distancing, masks, and handwashing should be practiced.

Find more resources for reopening your church at [susum.org/covid-19](https://susum.org/covid-19)