

A Plan for Using the LUMC Site during COVID-19 Restrictions

The Worship community of the Lacey United Methodist Church (LUMC) seeks to continue spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ in Lacey and in its surroundings as it also seeks to flatten the COVID-19 infection curve and ensure zero infections are spread by Church activities. This is the goal set forth by the Greater New Jersey Conference of the United Methodist Church (GNJ) for the reopening of its churches, programs, and missions. Simply put, this effort seeks to put into very real practice the familiar rule, “*do unto others as you would have them do unto you.*” None of us wants to put our neighbor at risk for COVID-19, and vice versa.

This plan, and its supporting protocols, are based on the presumption that there is a potential health risk to those who attend and participate in public space gatherings. It assumes that one or more individuals who may test positive for COVID-19, and who may be asymptomatic, or not, may come to the Worship space. And it also assumes that one or more individuals who come to the space may, for underlying health reasons, be greatly susceptible to COVID-19 infection. The plan seeks to make those risks as minimal as possible.

The plan does this by limiting the number of persons who may enter the space. It does this by prescribing measures intended to reduce the presence of viable virus in the space and by prescribing measures to limit its transmission from one person to another. It also calls attention to those health conditions that place some individuals at higher risk for getting the virus and being more vulnerable to its effects. By promoting these measures, the plan seeks to reduce the possibility for someone entering or leaving the gathering with a virus infection.

In summary, throughout this plan, emphasis is placed on the following principles:

Individuals wishing to enter a space to gather should assess their health risks.

Gathering spaces should be appropriately cleaned and disinfected; individuals should practice appropriate hygiene.

Individuals should expect limitations on the number of persons who may come into a space.

Individuals should socially distance themselves in the space.

Individuals should properly use face masks in the space, when indoors; if outside, wear face masks when social distancing is not maintained.

Copies of this plan will be available in the Sanctuary. Posters will be placed throughout the site reminding people to practice social distancing and to use facemasks.

This plan will be reviewed as supporting CDC, NJ, GNJ, and other guidance changes, and at least quarterly, to determine that its content is current and applicable to the Worship or activity space in which we come together.

Regarding the Worship spaces of the LUMC site, this Plan advises:

Consider your health conditions and carefully determine whether you should come into a public Worship or activity gathering space (Protocol 1). Additionally, attention to social distancing, use of face masks, cleaning and disinfection practices and gathering size limitations are other principal considerations when entering a public space. Signs are posted to advise that, when gathering indoors, those entering must wear face masks and maintain social distancing.

Under current New Jersey State protocols, there is a limit of 50 people in an indoor gathering space, such as the LUMC Worship space (Protocol 2). If more persons choose to come to Worship than our limit allows, we will have to ask them to please come to the service on the Facebook live-stream.

Initially, the number of persons who can come into the Worship space may be limited to approximately 40; the Pastor, Music Director, live stream and other technicians, and ushers will make up the 50-person limit. The Church office will coordinate with those wishing to attend services and develop lists of invitees for a given Worship service.

This plan will be distributed to church membership and the membership will be surveyed to determine those wishing to attend in-person Worship services, according to the plan. Lists of those wishing to come will be made and will be used to generate additional lists of persons who, on a rotating basis, are invited to services in numbers that allow LUMC to adhere to its current, limiting attendance number.

Please be aware that Worship services will continue to be live-streamed through the LUMC website (www.laceyumc.org) and Facebook.

If you choose to attend the Worship service, be aware that measures have been taken to clean and disinfect the space (Protocol 3).

Restroom use is permitted. In accordance with CDC guidance, use must observe appropriate social distancing and hygiene. This simply means “one-at-a-time” use, soap and water hand washing, and disinfecting wipes of surfaces touched (e.g., switches, doorknobs, handles). In addition, there will be scheduled cleaning of restrooms.

On the Worship level of the Sanctuary, the restroom is located to the right side, behind the altar area. Individuals requiring an accessible restroom should request help from an usher who will assist getting to the accessible restroom in Fellowship Hall.

Children are asked to remain with their families during the service. At this time, there are to be no children’s activities or services downstairs. Also, Sunday School will not meet.

Facemasks will be required in the Worship space and are required in all indoor areas of Church property (Protocol 2). Please bring your own mask if you have a favorite. Disposable facemasks will be available.

If you choose to attend the Worship service, plan to come earlier than you may have done previously in order to park in a place and manner that observes social and/or “courtesy” distancing between vehicles, being mindful of those exiting and entering vehicles next to you at the beginning and end of the service.

When moving from vehicle to Worship space, and returning after service, again please observe social and/or “courtesy” distancing between non-family groupings (Protocol 2).

Ushers will be facilitating the smooth flow of individuals into the Worship space and to socially distant seating. Please follow the directions of the ushers.

When entering the Worship space, doors may be open, or designated individuals (e.g., ushers), may open them to prevent many persons from touching knobs, latches, railings, etc. Sanitizing solution dispensers will be available at the entrance. Where touching of surfaces occurs, expect these to be routinely wiped by ushers with disinfectant wipes (Protocol 3).

Please enter by the front doors only (i.e., Lacey Road). If someone needs to enter by means of the ramp, please contact an usher to arrange for entering that way. Again, please follow the directions of the ushers.

Once in the Worship space, wait for an usher to escort or direct you to a seat. Seating must be in accordance with 6-ft social distancing protocols. Family groups may sit together. Again, please keep in mind, there is a 50-person limit in the Worship space.

Before going to a seat, ushers will perform a non-contact temperature check. If a temperature more than 100.4 °F is noted, the individual will be asked to return home and to seek medical follow-up. Please heed the directions of the ushers.

Bibles and hymnals will be available on a table near the entrance. You may use one of each for the service and then return them to a second table as you leave at the end of the service. If you wish to keep either, or both, for personal use at home or for future services, you may do so.

As has been LUMC practice, the order of Worship will be projected on the wall at the front of the Sanctuary. Bulletins will not be distributed.

The Worship service and order will be under the direction of the Pastor. At the present time, while there may be instrumental music for the service, there is to be no singing, out of concern for potential transmission of virus (Protocol 4).

At the close of the service, the ushers will escort and direct individuals in exiting the Worship space, again, observing social distancing. At the present time, time for conversation, contact and fellowship is discouraged on church property.

Tithes and offerings may be placed in offering plates located on tables near the exit as you leave. Thank you for your continued support of LUMC’s programs, community outreach and missions.

Regarding the Non-Worship and other activity spaces of the LUMC site, this Plan advises:

Consider your health conditions and carefully determine whether you should come into a public Worship or activity gathering space (Protocol 1). Additionally, attention to social distancing, use of face masks, cleaning and disinfection practices and gathering size limitations are other principal considerations when entering a public space.

For Church Office Practices

The LUMC Church Office area is in the east end of the Connolly Building. In this area are the Pastor's office and Church Secretary/Administrative Assistant's office.

Access to this area is principally through a customarily locked, exterior door facing Lacey Road. Additionally, there is access, also normally locked, to this area from internal spaces within the Connolly Building.

Entry to the Church Office area is arranged either by calling ahead (LUMC Office phone No. 609-693-5222) to request meeting with the Pastor and/or the Administrative Assistant, or directly by doorbell or knocking at the Lacey Road door.

Surfaces and other areas are routinely cleaned/disinfected either by time or by wiping by staff (Protocol 3).

When entering, please remember that wearing a face mask is required. Also, hand sanitizer is available; please use it.

When in the office space, please maintain social distancing; each office area has room for at least 4 individuals, plus Pastor and/or Admin. Assist. Chairs and a table are available in the spaces, as are other workstations, and can be arranged for 6-ft distancing.

When leaving the Office area please be sure to use hand sanitizer.

For Church Activities

Meetings of SPPR, Finance Committee, Trustees, Worship, Bible Studies, Church Council, and other Church organizations may occur as either in-person meetings or online meetings. GNJ RECOMMENDS meetings continue online or by conference call, where possible.

Some activities (e.g., Food Pantry, Summer Lunch, Thrift Shoppe) call for in-person activity. Specific written practices for each of these activities are to be prepared by the activity to indicate how each conforms to the overall plan.

Consider your health conditions and carefully determine whether you should come into a public Worship or activity gathering space (Protocol 1). Additionally, attention to social

distancing, use of face masks, cleaning and disinfection practices and gathering size limitations are other principal considerations when entering a public space.

Indoor activities must include, at a minimum, proper use of face masks and social distancing.

Restroom use is permitted. In accordance with CDC guidance, use must observe appropriate social distancing and hygiene. This simply means “one-at-a-time” use, soap and water hand washing, and disinfecting wipes of surfaces touched (e.g., switches, doorknobs, handles). In addition, there will be scheduled cleaning of restrooms.

For Outside Group Activities

The Fellowship Hall of the Sanctuary is currently used three evenings each week by participants of 12-step programs. Each group is advised that their use of the space is conditioned on their agreement to develop and implement written plans for their specific use of the available space that are consistent with the LUMC reopening plan, which considers limitations on meeting group size, individual health risks, social distancing, face masks, and cleaning and disinfection practices.

Each outside group is asked to identify at least one person to be a contact regarding plan practices and implementation.

At the present time, use of the Hall by outside groups is expected to be restricted to the South end (i.e., near the kitchen) side of the folding partition. The North end (i.e., near the stage) is currently in use for the LUMC Summer Lunch Program until approximately mid-August; this area is for storing and staging food items for distribution to certain school children. We estimate that the South end space can accommodate up to 30 people, which is within the NJ State maximum limit of 50 people for the entire Hall (Protocol 2).

For those planning to come to meetings, consider your health conditions and carefully determine whether you should come into a public activity gathering space (Protocol 1).

Be aware that measures have been taken to clean and disinfect the space (Protocol 3).

Please park vehicles in a place and manner that observes social and/or “courtesy” distancing between vehicles, being mindful of those exiting and entering vehicles next to you at the beginning and end of the meeting.

Please enter by the South end stairs. When entering, doors may be open, or designated individuals may open them, to prevent many persons from touching knobs, latches, railings, doors, etc. Sanitizing solution dispensers will be available at the entrance. Where touching of surfaces occurs, expect these to be routinely cleaned with disinfectant wipes (Protocol 3).

Once in the meeting space, wait to be directed to a seat. Seating must be in accordance with 6-ft social distancing protocols.

Before going to a seat, a non-contact temperature check will be done. If a temperature more than 100.4 °F is noted, the individual will be asked to return home and to seek medical follow-up.

Facemasks will be required in all indoor areas of Church property (Protocol 2). Please bring your own mask if you have a favorite. Meeting leaders advise that disposable facemasks will be available.

Restroom use is permitted. In accordance with CDC guidance, use must observe appropriate social distancing and hygiene. This simply means “one-at-a-time” use, soap and water hand washing, and disinfecting wipes of surfaces touched (e.g., switches, doorknobs, handles). In addition, there will be scheduled cleaning of restrooms.

The format and conduct of the meeting will be under the direction of the meeting leader. Again, please remember masks are always to be worn in the building and social distancing must be maintained. Chairs can be rearranged according to meeting needs; social distancing must be practiced.

At the present time, there is to be no use of kitchen equipment (e.g., coffee makers, microwave, refrigerators).

At the close of the meeting, designated meeting participants will clean frequently touched surfaces with disinfectant wipes.

Protocol 1: Health Risk –

COVID-19 is a new disease and there is limited information regarding risk factors for severe disease. Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, **older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions** might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Based on what we know now, those at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are:

- [People 65 years and older](#)
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility

People of all ages with [underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled](#), including:

- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- People who are immunocompromised
 - Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease

[CDC Guidance \(6/25/20\) People Who Should Consider Health Risks](#)

Protocol 2: Capacity –

As of 21 June 2020, the State of New Jersey has indicated that indoor gatherings may happen, with a limitation of 100 individuals, or 25% of the life hazard occupancy rating for the space, whichever is less. Masks must be worn indoors, and social distancing must be maintained, both indoors and outdoors. The life hazard occupancy rating for the Worship space is understood to be 200+ persons. The maximum number of persons permitted in the worship space is therefore 50 persons.

At the present time, the life hazard occupancy rating for the Fellowship Hall is 200 persons; 25% capacity would allow for 50 persons in that space for the purpose of gatherings. At the present time, this space is in use for the Summer Lunch Program and use of this space for Worship may not be needed for Worship activity. In addition, use of this space by outside groups will be dealt with elsewhere in this plan, as will other site areas (e.g., Connolly Building, Thrift Shop, Food Pantry), as the need develops.

[NJ Gatherings indoor and out \(6/22/2020\)](#)

[Interim CDC Guidance \(5/23/20\) for Communities of Faith](#)

Protocol 3: Cleaning/disinfection –

There are several practices available for deactivating COVID-19. There appear to be three practices which LUMC can use effectively, depending on circumstances.

1 – Time: The New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) published a letter report 17 March 2020, regarding the amount of time required for the virus to deactivate (e.g., to “die off”) on various surfaces. A report of these findings, indicating times and surface materials is attached. In general, if time permits, allowing a space to sit, undisturbed and unoccupied, for 4-6 days may be sufficient for the space to be effectively free of virus transmission risks.

[CDC et al Rept \(3/17/20\) COVID-19 Stability on Different Surfaces](#)

In addition, subsequent CDC reporting indicates that surface contact transmission risks are small for this virus and continue to be studied.

2 – Small Area Cleaning: Cleaning of hands and small surfaces can be accomplished by washing with soap and water for 20 seconds, according to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). If soap and water washing is not available or is not appropriate

for the surface to be cleaned, a sanitizing solution, containing at least 70% alcohol, can be used. Wipes (e.g., “Clorox”) can be used to clean surfaces, also.

3 – Larger Area Cleaning:

CDC: Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes

This document provides a general framework for cleaning and disinfection practices. The framework is based on doing the following:

1. Normal routine cleaning with soap and water will decrease how much of the virus is on surfaces and objects, which reduces the risk of exposure.
2. Disinfection using [EPA-approved disinfectants against COVID-19 external icon](#) can also help reduce the risk. Frequent disinfection of surfaces and objects touched by multiple people is important.
3. When [EPA-approved disinfectants external icon](#) are not available, alternative disinfectants can be used (for example, 1/3 cup of bleach added to 1 gallon of water, or 70% alcohol solutions). Do not mix bleach or other cleaning and disinfection products together. This can cause fumes that may be very dangerous to breathe in. Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours. Keep all disinfectants out of the reach of children. [Read EPA’s infographic on how to use these disinfectant products external icon](#) safely and effectively.

EPA - List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)

431 items listed *List N was last updated on July 1, 2020.*

[CDC References \(5/7/20\) to Cleaning and Disinfecting](#)

Protocol 4: Singing Risk for Transmission –

Current guidance regarding singing in church gatherings suggests that it would be prudent that singing not happen at the present time. CDC is silent on the subject in its faith guidance, although in guidance for other group gatherings, it strongly encourages wearing a mask when singing. Dr. Anthony Fauci, of the National Institutes of Allergies and Infectious Disease, and currently an advisor to the president’s COVID-19 task force, has stated churches should promote measures prohibiting singing. Anecdotally, CDC has linked one COVID-19 positive member for a singing group to the subsequent infection of 52 other members, over a 2 week period, two of whom died.

[CDC Guidance \(6/12/20\): Considerations for Events and Gatherings](#)

[CDC MMWRept \(5/15/20\): Skagit, WA](#)

[Dr. Anthony Fauci, \(5/27/20\) on keeping churches safe](#)

Protocol 5: Resources –

Personnel

Ushers/Greeters

Cleaning

- GNJ: Will greeters be gloved and masked?
- GNJ: Have you prepared scripts for greeters to guide people to worship safely?

Supplies

Face Masks

Disposable Masks – Expected Delivery: June 18

Hand Sanitizer

Hand Sanitizer Dispensers – Expected Delivery: July 21 - Aug 7.

Hand Sanitizer refill – Expected Delivery: June 19 - June 24

since the Hand Dispensers are due July 21 - Aug 7, we can purchase a spray bottle and I have the 99% alcohol that we can fill in the bottle and someone can spray each individual's hands when entering.

Cleaning Agents

Alcohol Wipes (individual packages) Expected Delivery: June 17.

Other

Non-contact Thermometer- Received

- GNJ: Where will hand sanitizers be placed?
- GNJ: How will you keep necessary inventory of masks, hand sanitizer, appropriate cleansers?
- GNJ: Who assures that adequate quantities of hand sanitizer are available and in in dispensers?