

Reentry at Tabernacle
Safety Protocol

Prepared by: Mark Snipes, Jessica Corbitt, and John Burgess, in conversation with key committee leaders and church staff. ***This protocol was voted on in October 2020 and is subject to change as Science and Data changes.***

First, we acknowledge that at this time there is not a way to enter into our Church facility where there is zero risk to you or to others. For some, this acknowledgement will keep them from coming into this facility until the pandemic is over. For others, they are willing to mitigate risk to enter into this sacred space. Both sides are heard and valued. That said, the suggestions that follow give us the best chance to lessen the risk of exposure for those who choose to come back into the church building.

Secondly, as a congregation with varying opinions, we need to agree on a few non-negotiables that will apply any time anyone is in the building. We will be opening the church in phases, but in every phase these things will stay the same:

Non-Negotiables:

The CDC says that if we wear our masks and keep 6 feet apart, these easy steps really help in stopping the spread of COVID. Thus, we will:

- **Wear masks at all times when inside the building**

- **Maintain social distancing (6 feet from people not in our household)**
- **Maintain Proper Hygiene (washing hands, cough into our elbows)**
- **Stay home if we are ill or showing possible symptoms (visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html?utm_campaign=AC_CRNA to see possible symptoms)**

Places we will take risks:

- 1. Community Ministry**
- 2. Worship Leadership**
- 3. Meeting direct needs of the community through hospitality or mission**

With this said, the above exceptions will be given priority when it comes to considering exceptions to the rules that follow. The three things mentioned above speak directly to our core values and need a bit more flexibility in fulfilling their mission.

The rhythm of being in the Church building will be different:

Please acknowledge that for the duration of this pandemic there will be no hugging, handshaking, high fives, passing the peace, passing offering plates or paper bulletins. ***There will also not be the usual community building time before or after the service.*** This will not be business as usual. We acknowledge that this will be jarring for us all.

Phase One: re-entry into Sanctuary for worship

In Phase One, we will be using the Sanctuary only. During this phase the alleyway door (beside the elevator) and the door leading directly into the sanctuary on Grove will be open. If you need the elevator, you will be accommodated through the alleyway door.

Before you enter the church, you will:

1. Be asked to use Hand Sanitizer
3. Be asked to answer a brief questionnaire (COVID symptoms, travel and contact)

4. Be put on a roster so we know who is in the building. This roster will be used to contact you if someone who you came into contact with has tested positive for the virus.

There will be extra masks available if you forget your masks at home.

The sanctuary will be situated in such a way that every third pew will be open for people to sit with barriers keeping people (or family groups) six feet apart.

As you enter the sanctuary, you follow signs to your seats. As you move through the aisle, please honor the six feet rule. With our aisles being as wide as they are, this should be an easy rule to follow. If you need to go to the bathroom during worship, please keep our non-negotiables in mind. Also, in Phase One we are asking that there be no food brought into the church. We understand that people will need water. If this is the case, please bring your own bottle and be as considerate as possible when drinking your water.

The rest of the building (other than restrooms) will be shut down so that we can take care of both the neighbors and volunteers who work in our community ministry and for the children and workers of the TCCC.

There will be no nursery or children's events in phase one (at least indoors during worship services.) This space is curated for youth and adults only right now. We love our young children, but know this is not the type of space that they can learn and grow in faith in age-appropriate ways. We also sense many parents need a moment of quiet to feed their own souls and relationship with God in this season. We encourage parents to share childcare responsibilities within their families, in coordination with another family so that each adult is able to attend at some point this fall.

Phase Two: Sanctuary/Sunday School Rooms/Fellowship Hall
(at least one month after the beginning of Phase 1. If there have
Been no outbreaks (3 or more cases) within the church for two weeks
and the Central Region positivity rate is under 7.5 percent)

In Phase Two, we will begin inviting people back into other parts of the building. In Phase Two, we hope that some Tab Circles (for Adults, Youth and Children) will begin to meet in Sunday School rooms or the Fellowship Hall, to talk, study scripture and/or stream worship together.

Before you enter the church, you will:

1. Be asked to use Hand Sanitizer
2. Be asked to answer a brief questionnaire (COVID symptoms, travel and contact)
3. Be put on a roster so we know who is in the building. This roster will
Also be used to contact you if someone that you came into contact with has tested positive for COVID-19.

There will be extra masks available if you forget your masks at home.

For activities happening in Sunday School rooms or the Fellowship Hall, the entrance and exit for the church facility will be the alleyway door. All other entrances and exits will be closed. If the event is in the sanctuary only, the entrance and exit will be the same as in Phase one, unless the reentry implementation team determines a more appropriate flow.

After going through the entry protocol, you will go directly to your groups assigned rooms (signs will be posted to help lead the way.) Once in your room, we ask that you, or any family member, refrain from roaming the building. Bathrooms will be open and cleaned regularly.

*In Phase two, as circles begin to meet, we know that eating together and having a cup of coffee are important communal elements. Until further notice, please do not bring food to **share** onto the premises (i.e no potlocks or shared donut boxes). If your group wants to eat a meal together, please bring individual meals. You may take your mask off to eat, but once done, please put your mask back on. Once the CDC changes its recommendations for sharing food, we will revisit this policy.*

In Phase Two, certain sections of the building will be shut down so that we can take care of both the neighbors and volunteers that work in our community ministry, the children and workers of the TCCC, those entering the church to help with Sunday worship leadership and others that call our building home.

In Phase Two there will be no access to the nursery. If you want to bring your child to your Tab circle, that is up to you and your circle.

What happens if there is a positive test from someone who has been in our building? If someone tests positive, we will send an email to all those on the roster who were in close contact with the person who has tested positive. If all of the rules are followed, only those who do not have a mask on and are within 6 feet of the infected person for a prolonged period of time would have to consider quarantine.

If you or a close family member (living in your home) have a positive test or a known exposure we ask that you do not come back into the church building until you receive two negative tests. This seems to be the norm for most churches and other non-profits.

Phase Three: Community Partners

(at least one month after the beginning of Phase 2. If there have been no outbreaks (3 or more cases) within the church building for two weeks and the Central Regions positivity rate is under 7.5 percent)

In Phase Three, the staff and leadership of the church will discuss the possibility of inviting outside groups back into our space. Being good community partners is important. In this phase we will open back up to people who use our facility regularly for community events.

The committee that will help guide the reentry process will create an application for people using the church building and will receive and review those applications. If that committee feels that the outside group is willing to follow the non-negotiable rules stated above, that application will go to the church staff and to the appropriate committees before a decision is made.

We will not always be in the midst of the pandemic. At some point, we hope sooner than later, things will be safe enough that we can come back to the church building without restrictions and we look forward to that day. Yet, we also know that we are called to be faithful in the midst of this season. Please be in prayer for the staff, our community ministry leaders, our neighbors, our faithful Discipleship Leaders, our deacons, our admin board and for one another as we navigate this challenging time always looking towards God to lead the way.

Please consider downloading the COVID-Wise app. This is a helpful tool that is designed to help people detect if they have been exposed to COVID. This community tool is free and you can download on your smartphone.