

CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
Effingham, Illinois

REOPENING LIVE CHURCH SERVICES  
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

FIRST COVENANT\*

As members of Centenary United Methodist Church (CUMC), we agree to follow the guidelines set forth by our Bishop and the governing bodies of the Illinois Great Rivers Conference (IGRC).

This First Covenant anticipates that we will be in Phase 4 of Reopen Illinois at the time CUMC has its first church service during the COVID-19 Pandemic. For the safety of everyone, we will be following the guidelines set forth in the document "Returning to the Heart of Worship" developed by the IGRC. Based on these conference guidelines, the following is hereby established and must be adhered to:

1. NO MASK, NO ATTENDANCE - Masks will be required by all attendees at each service from the time of entering to the time of departing CUMC, with the only exception being children under the age of 2. Masks will be provided to those who do not have one.
2. Those with COVID-19 symptoms, as well as those with recent exposure to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who have recently traveled to an area with a significant outbreak (unless receiving a recent negative test), should not attend live services for at least 14 days.
3. Online worship service options will be available for those not able to safely attend and for those not wishing to follow the guidelines of this First Covenant.
4. Multiple services will be established as determined by the Pastors to accommodate everyone who desires to attend in person.
5. Prior registration will be required to attend a specific service with no more than 50 people, including Pastors and greeters.
6. Social Distance Rules established by the Illinois Great Rivers Conference require six (6) feet between families.
7. Ushers will escort attendees to seats upon arrival. Upon completion of the service, ushers will also escort attendees to the exit to ensure safe physical distancing.
8. All attending must follow the directions on signage displayed at CUMC, as well as verbal directions by Pastors and greeters at each service.

9. Those who do not follow this First Covenant, after being given a polite reminder, if necessary, will be asked to leave the service until such time as covenant guidelines can be followed.

The Pastors have the right to cancel services and return to online options if they should feel that in-church attendee safety is, at any time, threatened.

At this time, the following will not be practiced while attending services:

1. Choir and individual singing
2. Group recitation
3. Connection time
4. Personal greetings by Pastors prior to or after services
5. Physically sharing the sign of peace
6. Communion
7. Children's nursery
8. Children's gathering time

This First Covenant dated this 25<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2020.

***\* At its January 18, 2021 meeting, Centenary UMC's Action Team made the following determination: In keeping with CDC Guidelines which state, that because "experts need to understand more about the protection that COVID-19 vaccines provide in real-world conditions, not enough information is currently available to say if or when the CDC will stop recommending that people wear masks and avoid close contact with others to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19." Therefore, masks and social distancing will continue to be required at this time for all attending worship, including those who have recovered from the virus and those who have been vaccinated for COVID-19.***

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By: Rev. Charles D. Curran  
Directing Pastor

Rev. Jessica Balby  
Associate Pastor

Kristin A. Smith  
Chair, Staff Parish Committee

Twisha Katt  
Chair, Trustees Committee