

June, 2020

North Raleigh United Methodist Church Reopening Stages

North Raleigh United Methodist Church is following a “go slow/go small” approach to reopening as the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic lessens over time. This approach is rooted in the call of scripture to love God with all our hearts and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31). Our approach is also consistent with the General Rule to “do no harm” as one of the hallmarks of our Wesleyan faith.

The approach outlined below is also guided by instructions and information from local and state public health authorities. However, this plan uses slightly different terminology (stages rather than phases) reflecting the unique nature of who the church is and what it does. Other entities may be able to reopen faster than the church can. Church gatherings, because so much of what we do requires close and sustained contact among persons, present a higher risk of infection than does a quick trip to the grocery store where generally contact with others is more casual.

This document is meant to be guide for North Raleigh in making the best decisions around reopening issues. Flexibility will be required to respond to circumstances as they are at any given time while at the same time ensuring we are fulfilling our vision to “glorify God and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by offering a safe and caring environment for anyone who is searching to be spiritually fulfilled and accepted.”

Stage Red

(Key Indicators—State and local infections increasing or plateauing, hospitalizations increasing or plateauing, limited testing available)

- Other than very limited numbers of appropriately distanced staff and volunteers preparing the worship video, no in-person worship, Bible studies, small groups, choir rehearsals, Sunday school classes, or committee meetings held inside the building.
- Groups of 30 or less may meet outside of the church building provided they use observe appropriate physical distancing and wear masks. The church playground remains closed.
- The church office is closed to members and the public. Staff members, exercising proper distancing and using masks when distancing is not possible, may work from the office at their discretion. Working from home is highly encouraged.
- Funerals attended by not more than 50 people may be held, or according to state guidelines.
- Pastoral care is done remotely using online means.

Stage Orange

(Key Indicators—State and local infections decrease to 5 percent or less positivity rate based on a 7 day rolling average of tests, hospitalizations decrease to 300 or less per day based on a 7 day rolling average, testing rate continues to increase)

- Other than very limited numbers of appropriately distanced staff and volunteers preparing the worship video, no in-person worship, Bible studies, small groups, choir rehearsals, or Sunday school classes are held inside the building.
- Core administrative committees (Trustees, SPRC, Finance, Executive Team) may meet in-person at the discretion of their chairs provided appropriate physical distancing is observed and masks worn.
- Groups of 50 or less may meet outside of the church building provided they use observe appropriate physical distancing and wear masks. The church playground remains closed.
- Preschool day camps may operate if permitted by state and local health guidelines.

- The church office will reopen to staff only and remained closed to members and the public. Staff will still have the opportunity to work from home as their job duties allow. Staff will be provided with proper safety protocols regarding physical distancing, sanitation, and masks.
- Funerals attended by not more than 50 people may be held, or according to state guidelines.
- Pastoral care is done remotely using online means.

Stage Yellow

(Key Indicators—State and local infections decrease to 2 percent or less positivity rate based on a 7 day rolling average of tests, hospitalizations decrease to 200 or less per day based on a 7 day rolling average, testing is widespread, detected outbreaks are contained)

- In-person worship may resume with attendance set at no more than 25% of maximum seating capacity. Proper physical distancing and masks will be required, including while singing, if congregational singing resumes.
- Holy Communion and Baptisms may be resumed if appropriate safeguards against disease transmission are taken.
- Bible studies, small groups, and classes that do not exceed 20 persons in attendance may meet inside the building provided proper physical distancing and masks are worn.
- Adult music rehearsals may resume, though the numbers of participants will be limited by required physical distancing. Other precautions must also be employed (including wearing masks and following hand washing protocols).
- Small groups of musicians may provide worship music, with proper physical distancing and precautions.
- Church committees may meet in-person at the discretion of their chairs provided appropriate physical distancing is observed and masks worn.
- Groups of 75 or less may meet outside of the church building provided they use observe appropriate physical distancing and wear masks. The church playground is opened if permitted by state and local guidelines.
- The church office will remain open and church members and the public will be admitted but at a pace limiting the numbers of persons

inside the church office at any one time. Staff will be provided with proper safety protocols regarding physical distancing, sanitation, and masks.

- Funerals and weddings attended by no more than 100 people, or according to state guidelines may be held
- In-person pastoral care may resume provided safety protocols are followed. Pastoral care to the most vulnerable to complications from the virus should be done with the utmost caution and remotely if possible.

Stage Green

(Key Indicators—A vaccine or clinically effective anti-viral treatments are widely available, infection rate is low, widespread testing is available, outbreaks contained)

- Restrictions on attendance for in-person worship are lifted.
- All church activities, including choir rehearsals, may resume in-person. Congregational singing may resume as normal.
- The church office will be open with no restrictions.
- Funeral and weddings may resume with no attendance restrictions.
- Mask and physical distancing are still encouraged (especially for vulnerable populations) but not required.
- In-person pastoral care continues following appropriate safety recommendations from public health officials.

As we reopen, North Raleigh United Methodist should be governed by a culture of care and compassion for one another that is expressed in four key public health practices suggested by Dr. Atul Gawande of Harvard University as being key to reducing the spread of COVID-19:

1. Symptom Checks and Self-quarantine
2. Hand Hygiene
3. Masks or Face Coverings
4. Physical Distancing

These practices affirm our commitment to showing Christian love and care to others as well building a grace-filled community.