

St. Mark UCC in person worship requirements (effective October 4, 2020) are as follows:

- Please enter church through the Fellowship Hall doors only.
- Upon entering, masked and gloved volunteers will: take your temperature; provide you with a mask if needed; and take your name and telephone number for tracking purposes (one per family unit). There will be a box/basket for your offering.
- You will be ushered to a pew, which will be filled from the front to the back. The pews have been marked off for social distancing purposes. Based on the CDC guidelines our sanctuary cannot exceed 44 people.
- Please be aware that you might not get your “regular pew”. Although we will make every effort to have those with mobility issues seated in a convenient area - to make everyone as safe as possible – we cannot guarantee anything at this time.
- All books, paper and pens have been removed from the sanctuary.
- Bulletins will be placed on the pews. Self-contained communion elements will be given to you upon entering; please indicate if you need a gluten free wafer.
- Worship dismissal will be pew by pew (back to front to maintain social distancing) and you will depart out the narthex door.
- There will be no fellowship time before or after the worship service. No doughnuts – no coffee! The drinking fountains are shut off as well. 😞
- No beverages can be brought into the sanctuary UNLESS they are in lidded cups with a straw that will allow sipping under a mask.
- ALL WORSHIPPERS OVER THE AGE OF 5 ARE REQUIRED TO WEAR FACE MASKS AT ST. MARK UCC.

What will the service look like in general? Here are some helpful details on what to expect:

- Pastor will be at the chancel/altar or pulpit area with a mask on when folks arrive.
- Pastor will remove the mask when conducting worship.

- Pastor will NOT be taking prayer requests or announcements “live”. Any requests/announcements need to be shared with Pastor via email or phone THAT week.
- Pastor will benedict from the chancel/altar area, then re-mask and stay in place until the sanctuary is cleared. Pastor will NOT be shaking hands with you.
- If you need to meet with Pastor privately know that this will be done wearing masks and maintaining social distancing in Pastor’s office.

Worship itself:

- Please remain seated during the entire service; remember that when Pastor chimes the bell it is a call for worship to begin – not for you to stand up! (Pastor will remind you...).
- There will be no “passing the peace”, no “live” prayer requests or announcements, no fellowship time.
- All scriptures will be read by one person during this time.
- Since worshippers will be wearing masks for the entire service, Pastor will take into serious consideration the length of congregational responses, including lengthy creeds and statements of faith.
- When it is a communion Sunday – a self-contained communion that has a wafer and juice sealed together will be given to you when you enter. Pastor will give you ample time to open this package, remove your mask and partake and then re-mask. We ask that you take the empties with you as you leave and deposit them in a bin near the Narthex doors.

Lastly, singing in worship?? Well, yes and no. It has been proven that this is largely an air borne virus; that means that it is primarily spread through the aerosol droplets that come from an infected person’s mouth. Singing has been shown to propel those droplets a great distance – therefore raising the chances of spreading the virus. We certainly don’t want that to happen at St. Mark!

So, here’s how the singing will be handled for the time being...

- Since the sanctuary is hymnal-less all words will be printed in the bulletin.

- There will be one person singing (either Pastor or a song leader) from the chancel/altar area at a safe social distance. The Pastor/song leader will be miked up.
- You will be invited to sing softly into your mask, hum, sing in your heart or simply listen.

Please know that the Pastor and council know how daunting this all must look to you on the page! Yet, we are doing all this so that we can meet again in as safe an environment as possible. **Please know that it is okay if you do not feel safe in returning to in-person worship currently;** please, also stay home if you are not feeling well!

At this time, we are still considering what our options for online worship might be...we will let you know how/if things change ASAP. Please indicate to Pastor if you are still wanting a sermon/bulletin sent out to you through the US Postal service.

Know that I look forward to being with you all in worship – on October 4th. Please know that worship still begins at 9AM.

Pastor Kim Brinkmann