**Covid – 19 Guidelines for Church Reopening and In Person Worship**

Preamble:

It gives us joy to welcome members, friends, and families back to in person worship and other gatherings. As we begin this slow and cautious reopening we assure everyone of our commitment to safety. We have made the decision in accordance with the recommendations of the state, county, and local authorities as well as the Conference of the Upper New York UMC to reopen on (date).

If you have a cough, fever or are exhibiting any signs or symptoms of a respiratory problem, or have been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19, we will require that you not attend until you are in good health.

We appeal to everyone to work together to eliminate potential issues and protect all members keeping in mind that, “We are our brothers and sisters keepers”.

Please be patient as we work through these trying times. Our goal is to keep everyone safe and healthy. We look forward to the progress we will make together and improvement in the situation.

Following are some other guidelines intended to keep everyone safe and healthy:

**Access to Sanctuary**

All worshippers are kindly requested to use the east entrance to the building where an usher wearing gloves and masks will be stationed to open the door preventing multiple individuals touching the door handle. Other doors to the narthex and sanctuary will be kept open until everyone is inside and worship commences.

Attendees will be asked whether they have any symptoms of the corona virus, had contact with anyone who tested positive for the virus or have recently traveled outside our region.

There will be no congregating in the narthex or welcome center before or after church.

**Those with underlying conditions that make them at high risk for contracting Covid-19 are encouraged in the first phase of reopening to view the service online from their home.**

If there is a line at the entrance when you arrive in the parking lot please wait in your car until the line is shorter.

**Masks and Hand Sanitization**

Every worshipper is required to wear a mask or appropriate face covering while in the sanctuary or any other part of the building. Masks will be provided for those who come without their own. You will NOT be allowed to enter the church unless you wear a mask.

The usher stationed at the door will provide some hand sanitizer to attendees for them to sanitize their hands as they are entering the building.

**Recording Attendance**

An usher will record the names of each person entering the building.

**Social Distancing**

In the first phase of reopening, attendance will not exceed 25% of building capacity (398). We will closely monitor attendance in order to ensure that we never go beyond our capacity to respect social distancing and remain in compliance with NYS guidelines. Once we have reached our 25% capacity we will make arrangements for those who cannot be accommodated at any given service.

Sit in only the designated pews as directed by an usher responsible for showing you to an open seat beginning at the front of the church to the back.

At the end of the service the ushers will direct attendees to leave starting from the back of the building to the front.

Upon the conclusion of the church service, (even though we all like to stand around and socialize) please DO NOT stand around and socialize. Please exit the building promptly.

**Use of Restrooms**

Please limit the number of people in the bathroom at one time and avoid overcrowding. To help prevent the spread of germs please wash hands thoroughly, use paper towels or wipes to touch doorknobs, faucets, light switches, etc.

Children **MUST** be escorted by a parent to the restroom.

**Cleaning and Disinfecting**

Our custodian has been trained in the use of safe and effective cleaning products and appropriate methods of disinfecting.

**Announcements**

There will be no announcements from the congregation. Please send all announcements to the church office before 10 am the preceding Friday and these will be read by Pastor Niles during the service.

**Miscellaneous**

There will be **NO** nursery room for children to play in at this time.

There will be **NO** coffee hour after church.

We have stored Hymnbooks, Bibles, and pew pads.

Prepackaged Communion will be served when the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is observed.

The ushers wearing masks and gloves will receive the offering and they alone will handle the offering bags.

The choir will not assemble in the choir loft in the first phase of reopening.

Thank you for your cooperation.