



Pandemic Response Plan:

Regathering Plan for The House of Hope Presbyterian Church

CRISIS STAGE

During this time the **church was closed** with limited staffing and worship and programming online. According to the Session, the Crisis Stage ended on May 20, and we are currently in Stage 1.

STAGE

1

CRITERIA:

- ✓ *Downward trajectory of COVID-19 cases reported within a 14-day period*
- ✓ *Downward trajectory of positive tests as a percent of total tests within a 14-day period*
- ✓ *Adequate hospital and treatment capacity with decreasing numbers of infected healthcare workers*
- ✓ *Adequate personal protective equipment, testing, tracing, and tracking capabilities*

- **The church campus is closed** except for staff and congregants performing essential church business. Others allowed into the building by appointment. Masks should be worn upon entry to the church, in common areas, and when there is more than one person in the office. Surfaces will be sanitized regularly.
- **Continue offering online worship services only.** Life rituals (weddings, funerals, baptism) kept to 10 individuals including clergy in attendance if held at the church
- **Committees and groups continue to meet online.**
- **No youth, children, family activities in the church or mission trips.** Outdoor activities are allowed if size and distancing are followed; access to the building is not permitted.
- **Expected timeframe:** Through August 2020

STAGE

2

CRITERIA:

- ✓ *Peak has passed according to state health officials*

- **Online worship continues**
- **Small meetings (10 people or fewer) can take place** in-person; protocols for sanitization and meetings are in place
- **Expected timeframe:** September–October 2020

STAGE

3

CRITERIA:

- ✓ *No resurgence of the disease; all indicators continue decline per federal and state criteria*
- ✓ *No government orders are in place*

- **In-person worship resumes** with significant safeguards; no communion, offering, processing or recessing
- Follow protocols recommended by health officials for distancing and use of masks.
- **Expected timeframe:** November 2020–March 2021

STAGE

4

CRITERIA:

- ✓ *No resurgence of disease*
- ✓ *Disease is still present*
- ✓ *No vaccine*

- **Worship in-person** with relaxed safeguards, but adequate spacing for both choir and congregation.
- **Expected timeframe:** April–August 2021

STAGE

5

CRITERIA:

- ✓ *Vaccine available*
- ✓ *No resurgence of the disease; all indicators continue decline*
- ✓ *No government orders are in place*

- **All normal practices may resume** as directed by Session.
- **Expected timeframe:** Autumn 2021

STAGE 1 DETAILS

1. The church campus is closed except for staff and congregants performing essential church business. Contractors and essential businesses are allowed access by appointment.
2. Continue offering online worship services only.
3. Recording worship continues in the sanctuary, while maintaining at least 6 feet of space between people—greater distance between those who are singing.
4. Life rituals, sanctuary only, (weddings, funerals, baptism) kept to 10 individuals in attendance including the clergy if held at the church.

FUNERALS:

- Simple services to avoid the involvement of additional people to support the service.
- Publicize the date and time if livestreamed.
- Nine participants are allowed plus clergy. Organist and soloist will remain in loft.
- Livestreaming equipment personnel will maintain distance from others.
- Funeral home staff allowed to set up and will vacate to the narthex before the family arrives and if escorting the family must leave for the narthex upon seating the family.
- Family arrives and is directly escorted by HOH or funeral home staff into the sanctuary; masks to be worn until in the sanctuary where masks are optional.
- Physical spacing within the sanctuary and upon entry and exit.
- No reviewal or wake; no reception, food, or post-funeral gathering.

WEDDINGS

- Simple services to avoid the involvement of additional people to support the service.
- The wedding party arrives and is escorted directly into the sanctuary by HOH staff and are masked until in the sanctuary where masks are optional.
- Nine individuals are allowed plus clergy. Organist and soloist will remain in loft.
- Church wedding coordinator may be on-site to facilitate arrangements, but will remain outside the sanctuary unless less than 10 people are present.
- No rehearsal. The wedding party may briefly consult the organist, wedding coordinator, and minister upon arrival in the west narthex with appropriate spacing.
- Pre-service arrangements such as florist will be under the direction of the church wedding coordinator observing spacing and attendance limits.
- No reception, food, or post-ceremony gathering.

BAPTISM

- The preference for baptism is to wait until the congregation can gather for services again.
- If family considerations suggest a more immediate baptism, the same guidelines as stated for funerals and weddings apply.
- The baptism party arrives and is escorted directly into the sanctuary by HOH staff and are masked until in the sanctuary where masks are optional.
- The baptism will be prerecorded for inclusion in an upcoming worship service and an elder will be present. Congregation notified through announcement or inclusion in the bulletin.

5. Bible studies, education programming, and small groups continue to meet online.
6. Office functions are limited, but enough to ensure the functions of the church are carried out using a mix of on-site scheduling and when appropriate at-home work. Masks are worn upon entry and in common areas and when there is more than one person in the office. Surfaces and common areas will be sanitized regularly.
7. Church committees continue to meet online. With a new pastoral team, individual interviews and small group meetings (of less than 10 people) will be allowed on-site for induction, orientation, and getting to know you activities while wearing masks into the church and maintaining social distancing. These activities will be scheduled in advance or by appointment only.
8. High-risk or vulnerable individuals, whether HOH staff or volunteers, should continue to follow the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control.
9. No in-person gatherings of youth, children, or families, and no youth conferences or mission trips. Outdoor activities are allowed if size and distancing recommendations are followed; access to the building is not permitted.

