

## **WORSHIP AT EMMANUEL UCC DURING THE CONTINUING TIME OF COVID-19**

*Without question, our primary purpose in gathering is to offer our praise and worship to our great and glorious God. God does not care HOW we worship; God only cares that we DO worship. While that is best done in community in the sanctuary, one can be part of the worshipping community in other ways.*

*Therefore and most importantly, dear friends, please make your own comfortable decision as to whether or not you feel it is best for you to be at the church building or not when we return. We are doing all we can to provide the best worship experience for every person, but we know we cannot be all things to all people. We appreciate your continued patience and understanding as we tweak our worship practices on a week-by-week basis as both circumstances and weather warrant – and we must also be prepared that we may need to return to an online-only format should the pandemic worsen.*

*Worship will look and feel different in some ways when you come into the church building. These pages will give you a synopsis of the plans Council has put in place.*

### **OPTIONS IF WEATHER PROHIBITS PARKING LOT WORSHIP**

The plan is to continue worshipping in the parking lot whenever possible while weather is tolerable, but we have prepared options in order to avoid canceling worship services. These options, when needed, will be available starting October 18, giving us time to make all the necessary preparations for safe worship indoors:

1. Worship in the sanctuary with masks required and appropriate social distancing. Much more on this below;
2. Worship in Fellowship Hall with a video feed of the service being projected. This will be overflow space if needed;
3. Worship outside in your car with your car radio tuned to 107.7 FM;
4. Worship via Facebook Live livestream or via a video of the service posted to the EUCC Facebook page.

While we are in a variable weather pattern this fall, the church will do its best to advise you in the weekly email and via a message on the church answering machine whether the service will be in the parking lot or move indoors. And when the weather totally turns, we will retain all these options.

### **WORSHIP ONLINE**

First, for our online worshipers – this link will take you to EUCC's Facebook page. You do not need a Facebook account to access this page.

[www.facebook.com/euccvalleycity](http://www.facebook.com/euccvalleycity)

We hope to be livestreaming as soon as possible, especially once we move inside. Until then, we expect to have the video of the worship service posted on Sunday afternoon.

## **AT THE CHURCH**

Now for those who come to the church building, here is what to expect. These best practices that have been implemented are drawn from many reputable church sources, county health departments, and medical professionals.

### **WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT ABOUT THE WORSHIP SERVICE**

- Masks and social distancing will be required.
- All hymnals, bibles, envelopes, and other loose papers have been removed from the pews to prevent transmission by touch. Likewise, common items such as tissue boxes are no longer at the end of each pew.
- The order of worship will change, and the service will undoubtedly be shortened from the traditional one hour.
- The main thing you will notice is that there will be no singing. With the extra breath used for singing, your aerosols travel much longer distances than when you are using a normal speaking voice and 6' becomes an inadequate protective distance. Choir will be suspended during this period. While there is no singing, music will still be an integral part of worship. Mike will offer his keyboard gifts, and Pam will be singing hymns on behalf of the congregation in a socially distanced and safe manner. We will have occasional special music offerings.
- Everything you need to participate in worship will be projected on the wall behind the pulpit, so there will be no printed bulletins. A few announcement sheets will be available for you to take home.
- Every other pew has been roped off and is closed to make sure we maintain social distancing in front of and behind us. More about this follows.
- We will not be passing common items such as offering plates, attendance pads, and communion trays.

### **MASKS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING**

For your safety and the safety of your fellow church members, Council is requiring that you wear a mask while you are in the church building and maintain social distancing of 6'.

## WELCOMING TABLE

As you enter through the glass doors, you will encounter a Welcoming Table similar to the picture on the right. Similar items will be near the front doors of the sanctuary. On the welcoming table, you will find:

- A supply of disposable masks in case you need one or forgot yours;
- Individual travel-size packs of tissues for your convenience;
- Individual bottles of water if you do not bring one, as the drinking fountain has been disconnected for your health and safety.
- A pump bottle of hand sanitizer;
- A basket that will receive your offerings. There will be blank offering envelopes available for your privacy;
- On a communion Sunday, individual packs of communion elements. Please take one from the table to your pew. They will fit in the pew racks just like a communion cup.



## SEATING IN THE SANCTUARY

- Our socially-distanced seating plan will allow us to accommodate 22 household units for worship in the sanctuary and more in Fellowship Hall.
- To accommodate social distancing, every other pew is blocked off with ropes. There are signs at the end of those pews to remind you that they are closed for seating.



- In each pew that is available for seating, you will find a pool noodle. While these are not quite 6' in length, they will give you a visual idea of how households or individuals at each end of a pew need to maintain space between them.



- Between the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall spaces, and knowing that there are many who are just not ready to return to public spaces, we anticipate being able to accommodate those who wish to worship in person in our socially-distanced community.

## **COMMUNION**

- You will have picked up your individually packaged communion elements as you come into the building and put them in the rack in your pew.
- Make sure you look at the packaging so that you can unwrap the wafer only prior to taking off the lid of the grape juice.
- Upon taking both elements, you may leave the package in your pew rack and, if you would, carry it to a waste basket after the service.

## **AT THE END OF WORSHIP**

- Please take water bottles, tissue packs, and anything else with you at the end of worship. We will not be reusing any of these items.
- Please be aware of social distancing and of others who are trying to navigate narrow aisles. We would encourage you to enjoy your catching up conversations in the open air of the parking lot.

One difficult request we need to make of you: should you contract COVID-19 or become quarantined because of contact with a person with an active case, please contact Pastor Brian immediately at 440-225-4458 so that the church is aware and we can cooperate with any contact tracing that may be required by the local health department.

Yes, friends, worship is going to be different. In any form and in its many forms, may our worship be a blessing to you!