

Frequently Asked Questions about the COVID-19 Policies

approved by Session on 01/21/2021.

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Why aren't we doing joys and concerns or announcements from the congregation?

To comply with CDC guidelines, we will not have congregation members loudly speak due to the increased respiratory droplets it produces. If you would like to submit a joy, concern or an announcement please talk to Pastor Amanda and she will include it in worship.

Why is seating so limited?

Seating is limited to make sure that everyone is socially distanced. Careful effort was made to ensure that everyone is sitting 6 feet apart from one another on all sides.

Registering for church is a hassle. Why do we have to sign up?

The sign-up sheet is not there to exclude anyone, rather it is there to give us an idea of how many people we are expecting in worship. This helps us make sure that we have enough seats for everyone. This also makes sure we have a list of people who were in church for contact tracing in case someone was to unknowingly spread COVID-19 while they were in worship.

Why can the kids sit next to each other in Sunday School, but we cannot?

The children's Sunday school class is seated by family group. The children's family groups are separated 6 ft apart in the Sunday school classroom.

I miss seeing the kids in worship. Can they come up for children's time?

Since children's Sunday school is going on during the worship service the children will not be coming up for children's time. This is to limit the children's exposure to people outside of their family and to keep them safe.

I have a hard time hearing in the sanctuary. What is being done about it?

We are working hard to make it easier to hear everything in the sanctuary. We are increasing the sound in the speakers in the fellowship hall and the sanctuary. This will be an ongoing process. Pastor Amanda is trying different ways to improve her sound quality by using a mask insert.

Can't Pastor Amanda take her mask off while she is leading worship?

No, Pastor Amanda will leave her mask on while she is leading worship. This is for her safety and so that she is obeying the indoor mask mandate put in place by Governor Walz.

The service is too short. Can we lengthen the worship service?

The worship service will last no more than twenty-five minutes to limit the time of exposure to COVID-19. At this time, the service will continue to be short so that we can keep our church family safe.

I miss the music in church. Can we sing?

We will not be singing in church at this time. The MN Department of Health has stated, “Singing and instrumental music produced by woodwind or brass instruments are higher-risk activities for COVID19 spread due to the aggressive expelling of respiratory droplets. Congregational singing is strongly discouraged during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

We will continue to follow the Minnesota Department of Health recommendations so that we can worship safely.

There are other churches in town that are singing and/or have longer worship services, why can't we?

Every church has a choice of how they are going to handle the coronavirus pandemic. The Session of First Presbyterian Church made their decision by following guidance from the MN Department of Health and the Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area. We are doing everything we can to ensure that our church members can worship safely. It is extremely difficult, but we know that bold leadership is required during these unprecedented times.

I miss the longer virtual worship service with hymns. Can't we just go back to online worship?

At this point we will continue to have in-person worship. The Session is monitoring the COVID-19 numbers in our area and will adjust the worship service, as necessary. If you feel strongly about going back to online worship or have other feedback, please email your thoughts to Pastor Amanda at presbypastor@kmtel.com.

I miss “normal” church with fellowship afterwards. When can we be back to “normal”?

Since the pandemic is still going on, we do not know when the restrictions will be lifted. We look forward to the day where we can fellowship together as a church family. As more people get vaccinated that will help build up herd immunity to the virus. When the MN Department of Health and the CDC tell us that we can fellowship together safely we will communicate that to you.

I am so tired of all the restrictions and wearing a mask. I miss church the way it used to be.

We are all tired of living through a pandemic. We miss the way church used to be too. However, we know that we need to follow these guidelines from the Minnesota Department of Health and the CDC so that we can keep our church family safe. The most loving thing we can do right now is to continue to wear our mask and follow the rules so that this pandemic can come to an end. Please continue to hold our healthcare workers, those who work in vaccine production, and all those who are suffering from COVID-19 in your prayers.

I have a question that you did not answer.

Any other questions can be directed to a member of session or Pastor Amanda, her email is presbypastor@kmtel.com.