

Hello Hopeland Members, Attenders, and Guests!

Below are guidelines for the return to Sunday morning worship, which starts on July 12th. And please hear me when that I say I am very much looking forward to worshipping with you again. Please read these guidelines, as they affect the flow of worship and hopefully will bring everyone on the same page when we do meet on Sundays.

While we are taking as many precautions as we reasonably can to keep worship here in the Sanctuary as safe as possible, I want to remind you of Proverbs 27:1 – "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth."

In other words, we cannot control every scenario – that's God's prerogative, not ours. As a result, coming to worship means (as it does on any Sunday) that you're taking responsibility for yourself. The Pastor, the Church Council, or anyone else for that matter cannot make you any guarantee that you will not come into contact with COVID-19 while here. Which leads me into our first bullet point:

1. This hopefully goes without saying, but I will say it anyway for the sake of being thorough: **if you are sick, please, please stay home.** Your church family here at Hopeland will pray for you during the worship service, and once you're healed up, we will still be here.
2. **There will be two worship service times on Sundays: one at 9 AM and a second at 10:30 AM.** The whole church leadership hopes that this will spread out the attendance and make worship a bit safer for everyone.
3. **There will still be an FM broadcast of both worship services!*** Part of the beauty of our radio system for Sunday at the drive-in is that the set up is exceptionally portable. If you park in our church parking lot and turn to FM 88.9, and as long as your radio works, you will hopefully be able to hear everything from the organ and piano to the prayers and the sermon.

(* We've tested this option and appears to be working well during our tests.)

4. **A video of the Sunday morning sermon to our church Facebook page and website will continue to be upload, which will be set to go live at 11:00 AM on Sundays.*** I intend that this will continue until we are all back in worship together, and the restrictions are lifted.

(* This is limited also by our ability to have technology cooperate. We have had some technical problems before, and we will surely have more, but I make every effort that things run smoothly when it comes to technology.)

5. **Sunday School, Children's Church, Choir, and our Nursery are still closed until further notice.** Extension ministries that do not meet during Sunday mornings are under the discretion of their leaders.

6. **Members of Hopeland Church should expect to wear masks for our worship services (except for those who are prohibited by medical conditions).** As members of our church, part of our vows involve taking personal responsibility for the worship service at Hopeland, and this is one of the ways we can show hospitality for everyone who comes in through the doors. This also shouldn't be anything out of the ordinary for us at this point, since masks have been part of our daily lives for some time now.

7. **There will be a limited number of masks available for use if you do not have a mask.**

8. **There will be hand sanitizer available at the front doors and outside of the Sanctuary.** Please make use of them when coming and going, for your own sake, and for those who might be in the building after you.

9. **Every other (or more) pews will be closed to follow physical distancing guidelines suggested by the CDC (which is 6 feet).** Please respect the distance. Families that are currently in frequent contact should, of course, respect others gathered, but may, of course, sit with each other.

10. **The Offering will not be taken as part of the worship service to avoid contact.** There will be a place to drop off your Offering at the entrance to the Sanctuary, and the Offering that is given each week will be spiritually lifted in prayer during our time of prayer together in worship. *Also, as a reminder, if you have been saving your tithes for when we returned to worship together, this is the time to bring them.*

11. **Communion Sunday will be our first Sunday back. We will not be handing out the Communion elements the way we have in the past.** At the drive-in service, I have asked those wishing to take part in communion to bring their own bread and juice/water from home. Hopeland will continue this practice while restrictions are in

place. I encourage you to bring elements for yourself (and to share with your family). However, there are a limited amount of individually wrapped, disposable fellowship cups on the table in the gathering space that have a wafer and juice in them.

12. The order of worship itself will be different, as we will be making sure that the service ends early enough to give transitional time between the two services. It may be that your favorite parts of the worship experience feel missing. Just remember that this isn't forever – as more restrictions lift, more pieces of worship will return to the service.

13. Things may change from week to week. The worship service is always a changing expression of love for God. Because the information on the ground changes from the standpoint of the United Methodist Conference, the Governor, and other sources, it means that Pastor Russ or I may make changes on the fly depending on the week, and will do our best to communicate those changes to you. So, please keep an eye on your email inbox as well as our Facebook page and our website. And, don't hesitate to call.

You may have questions concerning the service, and I am available to answer any that you have. Some questions I may not be able to answer until a week or two after we return. But, you are always welcome to contact me by email at paul@methodistpastor.com and we can discuss questions and concerns you may have.

Please remember to pray for Hopeland Church as we worship together, and remember that others are also in prayer for you.

God Bless,

Pastor Paul