

IN-PERSON REGATHERING FAQ

How are we planning to regather and where do these metrics and other recommendations come from?

The Regathering Task Force has consulted a variety of sources to develop the working guidelines for phased regathering based on specified metrics. Chief among these sources is the Wisconsin Council of Churches which has provided regular recommendations for faith communities based on the current science. We especially appreciated their framing of decisions as on a spectrum of safety - not as safe or unsafe - and their focus on prioritizing the health and well-being of our neighbor in all decisions.

[Returning to Church – Wisconsin Council of Churches \(wichurches.org\)](http://wichurches.org)

What about this study I read about...?

If you have a recent study or article that you believe will help inform our decision-making, please feel free to forward to Kim Darling (kdarling@gmail.com). The TF is committed to staying up-to-date on the research.

What is Phase Three?

This is the first phase of regathering where individuals not actively participating in the service will be invited to attend. During Phase Three, select small groups and their families will be invited each Sunday (e.g. members of Council or certain commissions). The purpose of this phase is to allow us to try out our protocols and new ways of worshipping in a hybrid setting to see what works and what needs to be changed prior to entering Phase Four. There will be no open sign ups during this phase. A list of the groups participating each week will be distributed, and each member that is included in those groups will receive a link to a sign up form that will include a few health screening questions.

What is Phase Four?

When metrics allow, we will open worship to up to 50 attendees. Each member of our community will be invited to express their interest in returning to in-person services (conducted under our published COVID-19 safety protocols). All persons who express an interest will be divided into groups - Groups A and B (and Group C if necessary) and invited to attend worship on alternating weeks. There will be no open sign ups during this phase. Worship services and all group church events (nurtures, congregational meetings, commission meetings, etc.) will also continue virtually.

How will I know if it is my week to sign up?

You will be assigned (by household) to a group. You will get an email inviting you to complete a sign up form the Tuesday before your week. You must complete this form by Friday if you plan to attend. We will also maintain a Google document that the groups by assigned week Cindy Dobbs will be able to share the link (churchoffice@firstuccdc.org).

What if I originally said I didn't want to worship in-person but circumstances have caused me to change my mind?

Let the office know. We welcome people to join the in-person list at any time; please come on the Sundays assigned to your group.

What if I can't come on my assigned Sunday? Can I switch with someone?

Short answer: No

Long answer: At least initially, we need people to stick to their assigned Sundays for in-person worship. Everything from how the seats are arranged to contact tracing sheets depends on this. We all hope that as we settle into Phase 4, that we'll be able to build more flexibility into our attendance procedures. If you need to switch from Group A to Group B permanently, please let the church office know.

Why aren't we requiring vaccination for attendance?

Some are currently unable to be vaccinated either because of age or health concerns. In addition, vaccine distribution and our country's history of medical injustice means that the largest proportion of those who have not been vaccinated reside in many of the most vulnerable communities - the poor, non-English speakers, immigrants, people of color. Finally, vaccination does not guarantee that someone cannot catch or spread COVID. While our vaccines are extremely effective and truly a miracle of science, they are not 100% effective. The only way we will be able to gather safely in large groups is to help our community reach herd immunity.

Why aren't we taking temperatures at the door?

Studies show it does not help prevent spread. The study referenced in the linked article found that less than 8% of respondents reported having a fever within 10 days of becoming sick. Given the large percentage of folks who are asymptomatic, only about 4.6% of people have a fever while they are contagious. Instead of relying on checking on one symptom of COVID at the door, we ask attendees to monitor their own well-being for any sign they might have become infected (fatigue, cough, headache, shortness of breath, or a fever)

<https://precisionhealth.iu.edu/news-multimedia/news/fever-scans-may-not-be-helping-stop-the-spread-of-covid19.html>

Why are we still requiring masks?

The CDC recommendations regarding not wearing masks inside apply only to fully vaccinated individuals. Masks continue to protect those around us who have not been vaccinated or those who are immuno-compromised.

How do I volunteer to usher or assist with worship?

If you wish to volunteer as a reader or liturgist during Sunday service (either in-person or via Zoom), please look for a signup sheet in the church newsletter or worship folder. If you wish to usher, please contact Outreach and Membership.

When can we sing?

We don't know yet, but probably not until herd immunity is reached. Unfortunately, the research has been fairly consistent that congregational singing is a high risk activity in spreading COVID.

More recent research indicates it may be safer to have an individual or a small group to sing in the service, and we continue to closely monitor that research.

When will we have childcare and in-person Sunday School again?

Christian Education is developing a phasing schedule.

Are we going to stop having virtual services?

No! One of the great blessings of this time has been the push it provided our congregation to offer virtual services. This has allowed us to welcome back geographically distanced members and welcome in new geographically distanced members. We are committed to maintaining a virtual option for worship even when we are fully back in person for all who are unable (for any reason) to gather with us in the sanctuary.

Are the guidelines set in stone?

No! The task force and staff continue to monitor the on-going research and recommendations from the CDC and other authorities. As we gain experience and as recommendations and information evolves, we will update and revise the guidelines. We are committed to returning to in-person worship services as quickly as we can do so, consistent with protecting the health of all in our community, including the most vulnerable among us.