



Trinity United Methodist Church

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Dear Trinity Church Family,

Clearly, the last several months have been a challenge. Since March, we have been faced with a pandemic that has altered our lives personally, professionally and spiritually. That said, with the Lord's help, Trinity has found ways to persevere and maintain its ministry in new and unique ways. Who would have known we would be live streaming worship services, worshiping outside on the front lawn or utilizing Zoom for bible study and ministry meetings? Well, we have and it has worked. Praise the Lord!

That said, there is still a strong desire to take the next step and gather once again in our sanctuary. In an email poll of the congregation with over 150 responses, 54% said they were ready to begin worshiping in Trinity's sanctuary. So, on November 1st, we will begin doing so for those who are ready. For those who are not, for whatever reason, it is okay! Please do not feel pressured to do something you are not comfortable doing. We will continue to offer a live stream service, which can be viewed every Sunday and throughout the week.

For those who are ready to meet inside again, a re-entry team has been formed and is meeting diligently to establish protocol for a safe and orderly re-entry while allowing meaningful worship for as many as possible. While this is still a work in process, much of the ground work has been laid and we are at a point where we would like to share. We are doing so using the enclosed FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions). We would ask that you please review and familiarize yourself with the process, understanding it is not perfect and there will be a few bumps in the road. We also ask for your patience and assure that as circumstances and guidelines change, so will Trinity's protocol. For now though, this is our plan.

Yours in Christ,

Warren Rice
Worship Team Chair

Trinity UMC Worship Re-Entry

Frequently Asked Questions

When will indoor worship begin?

Sunday, November 1st

Will there be more than one service?

Yes – We will go back to our “normal” schedule of two services, one at 8:00 am and one at 10:30 am.

Will the outdoor service be discontinued when indoor services resume?

Yes

Will live streaming continue?

Yes – Live streaming will continue with the 10:30 service.

Will the two worship services differ?

Yes – Like before, the 8:00 am service will be more contemporary and the 10:30 service more traditional.

Will health and safety protocols be implemented?

Yes – Trinity continues to follow guidelines for religious organizations issued by the Calvert County Health Department. Many of the answers below are formulated from this guidance. As circumstances and guidance change, so will Trinity’s protocol.

Will seating capacity be limited?

Yes – Realistically, at top capacity, we believe we can seat about 90 people in the sanctuary, including the balcony. This does not include the worship participants such as the pastor, liturgist, musicians, audio/visual technicians, etc. So, maybe as many as 100 total individuals. We also plan to use the Gathering Room as a “second sanctuary” for up to 20 additional people to view the service on the monitor.

How will seating be limited?

Starting at the first full length pew on each side, we will use every other pew. This means some pews will be tastefully roped off and remain unoccupied. This will leave approximately six feet between worshipers from front to back. Each pew has three cushions, six feet in length. For the pews used, the center cushion will be removed, conveniently leaving a six foot gap between the two cushions. This will leave six feet between worshipers to the right and left. For worshipers to sit on the same cushion, they must reside in the same household. One cushion can hold up to three people but under these circumstances, cushions may have as few as one individual or as many as three.

Can families sit together?

Yes – Families residing in the same household can sit together. For larger families, we will even try to put two cushions together or as many as three cushions in one pew. The restriction of right and left does not apply and they are still six feet from the people behind and in front.

Will reservations be required?

Yes – For a number of reasons, reservations will be required. To maximize the number of worshipers and have an orderly entry, having predetermined seating is necessary.

How do we make reservations?

Reservations can be made during the week by calling or emailing the church office prior to the church office closing at 4:00 pm on Friday. Because questions may come up and a level of detail is required for reservations, phone calls are the preferred method. Reservations can be made by calling 410-535-1782, Monday – Friday from 8:00 – 4:00 or by emailing churchoffice@trinityumchurch.org

If we are regular attendees, will we need to make a reservation every week?

Yes – To maintain consistency and deal with a changing landscape, we are asking all attendees to reserve and confirm their attendance every week.

Can I choose my seat?

While we will make every effort to accommodate some basic desires (i.e. front or back, center or side, balcony, etc), we will not be able to allow attendees to select specific seats.

Will questions be asked and screening occur as we enter the church for worship?

Yes – There will be two points of entry into the sanctuary. The first will be the door near the church offices. The second will be in the narthex at the rear of the sanctuary. Screeners will be posted at the door just prior to entering the sanctuary to ask a few brief questions and sign people in. These questions will also be posted on the door outside of the church, so people can be prepared to answer these questions.

Will social distancing occur?

Yes – After entering the church building, we are asking people to maintain a six foot distance while waiting to be screened and entering the sanctuary.

Will we need to arrive early?

Yes – This is very important. With a screening process and reserved seating, it will be necessary for attendees to arrive early to be sure everyone is seated prior to the start of the service.

How will we be seated?

After being screened, a host/usher will escort you to your seat.

Will we be required to wear masks?

Yes - Face masks are required for all attendees unless an individual has a true medical reason he/she cannot safely wear a face covering. Children between the ages of 2 - 5 are encouraged to wear masks, children under 2 are not.

Will there be music?

Yes – Like the recent live stream and outdoor services, there will be music but it will be limited. Leah Woods, our Director of Music Ministries, will be able to play the piano/organ and sing with accompanying instrumentalists. There may also be an occasional soloist.

Will the congregation be able to sing?

No – Under current guidelines, singing by the congregation and choirs should not take place.

Will communion be served?

Yes – Similar to what we have been doing at the outdoor service, prepackaged cups of juice and wafers will be available to all attendees prior to the service, the first Sunday of every month.

Will we take an offering?

Yes – Similar to what we have been doing at the outdoor service, clearly marked boxes will be available to place tithes and offerings.

When the worship service concludes, how will we exit?

Similar to a wedding, hosts/ushers will invite occupants of a pew to exit, one pew at a time. We ask that you please exit quickly to allow others to exit in an orderly fashion. Doing so allows for social distancing.

Will there be coffee, snacks and a social time after the service?

No – For a number of reasons this will not occur. One is the need to clear the building and sanctuary quickly to allow for cleaning/sanitizing between services. Another is the Gathering Room will be used as a “second sanctuary” to allow as many attendees as possible in the building.

Will there be cleaning/sanitizing done between the services?

Yes – A team is being formed to follow proper cleaning protocol between services. The church sexton will fulfill this responsibility after the second service.

Will there be a Nursery and Sunday School?

No – For now, the protocols for safely operating a nursery and conducting Sunday School preclude Trinity from offering these ministries at this time. Again, as circumstances and guidelines change, so will Trinity's protocols.