

Return to the Building: Frequently Asked Questions

A Working Document as we Move Toward Return

Top 5 FAQ's:

How will we know when it is safe to return to the building?

The Return to the Building Taskforce is working with church leadership to utilize recommendations of medical and science professionals as well as trends in our area to make an informed decision about our safe return.

When will we return to the building for worship?

While a date has not yet been set, we anticipate returning no sooner than September. We are working hard to plan and make sure all the necessary precautions and practices are in place first to keep people safe when we return to worship.

Should I wear a face covering?

Yes. We ask that everyone over the age of 3 entering the church building – either for worship or meetings, wear a face covering.

How will we maintain social distancing during worship services?

As we continue to exercise caution due to COVID-19, we will restrict maximum capacity in the sanctuary to 50 people. We are currently working on a process that will include procedures for entering and exiting the building, seating procedures as well as keeping physically distant from one another.

Will there still be an online worship option if we do not feel comfortable returning to the church building?

Absolutely! We know that while we love being together, it will not yet be safe for some to return and that online worship has given people the opportunity to connect even when ill or traveling. We believe online worship will always be an option in our life together moving forward.

General Questions:

Where will I find current information and updates?

Information and updates are sent out through the church newsletter, other emails and posted on the church website (icdisciples.org).

When will our staff be back working in the building?

Because our staff is comprised of only a few people, each with their own work area, we have allowed our staff to work in the building as needed and to work at home when they can. Even as the flexibility to work from home continues, you some staff will be moving back toward regular office hours. As we shift in this direction, we will be sure to follow spacing and disinfecting practices as well as the use of face coverings when space is shared. As staff return to the office, the building will remain locked. If you need to come to the building, please call ahead to make sure someone will be there.

What if I need to get in touch with a staff person?

The staff continue to be available to you via phone and email. They are dividing their work time between the church office and home but want to hear from you. Do not hesitate to reach out if you need something or just want to talk.

Contact information is as follows:

- Jill Michel: icdisciple.pastor@gmail.com, 417-439-7391 (cell), 319-665-2276 (home)
- Kara Seaton: icdisciple.kids@gmail.com, 319-530-3255
- Laura Kittrell: icdisciple.music@gmail.com, 319-325-7673

What should I do if I need to come to the church building during the week?

Call first to make sure someone is in the building. Please wear a face covering. We will keep a small supply of masks on hand in case you arrive without one. We also ask that you be aware of those around you and practice social distancing.

Questions about Worship:

Do we have cleaning supplies to keep the church clean?

Many of our current supplies are on backorder due to high demand. We will not open the church for worship until we have plenty of cleaning supplies on hand.

Should we greet one another as usual?

As much as we want to hug and shake hands, it is not currently safe to do so. We ask that you refrain from doing so until it is safe. This is a personal health decision that impacts everyone around you.

Will we screen people entering the church?

We have not yet decided whether we will screen people. This decision will be made and communicated before we begin worshipping again in person. We will ask, if you are not feeling well, that you please stay home.

What should I do if I come to church and feel ill during the service?

For the safety of others, please leave immediately if you are not feeling well. Notify the church office if you came to church and then became ill.

What should I do if I get sick after attending a worship service at the Church?

Please immediately notify the church office that you are sick.

How many services will we have?

Our current plan is to have two shorter services (30-40 minutes) and to invite people to indicate their intention regarding the service they plan to attend so we can be sure not be over capacity at either service.

How will we accommodate visitors?

As a welcoming congregation, visitors are always considered in our plan. As details for our return to worship are finalized, they will include ways to communicate with, keep safe, and welcome visitors.

Will we celebrate communion?

Communion will be served in a way that does not require multiple people touching the same surfaces. We will provide communion, but if you prefer to bring your own elements to receive as communion you are welcome to do so.

Will we have offering?

We will not pass the offering plates as we have done in the past. We will have a basket out for you to place your offering in while entering or leaving the church.

I have heard that singing spreads potentially more germs than talking. Will we sing?

Our current plan is that congregational singing will be replaced with live instrumental music or recorded vocal music.

Will there be new leadership roles for church members due to new practices?

As we figure out the details, the volunteer roles for Sunday mornings will change. We will be sure to communicate the roles and responsibilities and let people choose to serve in ways they are comfortable.

In what other ways will the worship service be different once we return to the church?

Our current plan will be to seat people to keep household units properly distanced from one another.

We will make sure that worship leaders do not share microphones, music stands, etc. and maintain appropriate physical distance from one another. Some worship leading may be prerecorded and played on the screens.

We plan to remove hymnals, writing utensils, etc. from the pews and tables.

Will we have refreshments and fellowship time?

For the immediate future we will not share refreshments or have fellowship time. For now, we are asking that you simply arrive in time for worship and leave promptly after the service. Gathering close to each other and sharing food does not yet seem safe, plus because of having multiple services it will be important that we have time to clean and disinfect between services.

If we cannot sing, touch, have fellowship, etc., why would we even open?

We want to be together as soon as we possibly can, even if it means having things be different for a while. We can observe appropriate COVID-19 rules and still find value in being together in community.

What safety measures can I expect to see on a Sunday morning?

We will be practicing social distancing, wearing face coverings, not sharing congregational singing, cleaning high touch surfaces through gathering time and between services, and employing other practices to keep people safe.

Will there be a nursery during worship?

We are continuing to investigate how we can do this safely, but for now we would ask families to arrive prepared to have their children with them in worship. Also remember that common areas like the children's area and common items like the books and prayer items at the back will not immediately be available.

Will there still be Sunday School?

We are not planning to have Sunday School immediately.

Could we worship outdoors?

While this would not necessarily be a reliable option for weekly worship, the idea of an occasional outdoor worship service is being considered. If this can be safely planned, more information will follow.

Will the church be cleaned between services?

We will wipe down the "high touch" areas such as door handles and the sinks in the bathrooms. We will also disinfect seating areas. To be together, we ask that you continue to practice safe hygiene while at church by washing your hands regularly and not touching anything that you do not need to touch. This will help everyone stay safe. We will have a non-touch hand sanitizer unit at the upper level front door.

Questions about Other Gatherings:**Will we be able to have Potlucks?**

We will look forward to sharing meals when it is safe to do so. However, because of the social distancing challenges and high touch surfaces of potlucks, this will not be something that happens right away.

Can we utilize the kitchen?

When it is safe to share meals, the kitchen will be open. If there are reason the kitchen needs to be used (e.g. fixing a meal for a local helping agency), contact the church office to schedule and find out what protocol needs to be in place.

When will small groups be able to return to the building?

As it becomes safe to do so, small groups will be welcomed back into the building. The decision for groups to return will be made on a case-by-case basis factoring in the make-up and activities of the groups (number in the group, level of risk of group members, what kind of activities they engage in, etc.). For the immediate future, all gatherings will continue online.

What are youth and children's programs doing to adjust for social distancing guidelines?

With ministries for all ages we are asking questions about how we can pursue them safely. At this point all children's and youth programming has moved online.

When will outside groups resume use of the building?

Until we feel the building is safe for all, we will not open it for the use of outside groups. The one exception is the daycare which has remained open throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. As an essential service for working parents, this has been important, and the daycare follows all regulations as set by the Department of Human Services.

What about weddings/baptisms/funerals?

Each request will be evaluated at the time of the request. It will be determined at the time if we can safely accommodate the event.

Can we gather in households for spiritual support and church activities?

At this point in time, we are still recommending that groups gather via Zoom. Contact the office if you need a Zoom meeting time setup.

Questions about Finances:

How is this separation affecting our financial future?

We are grateful for the faithfulness and generosity of our First Christian family. At this point, our finances remain in good shape and people continue to give generously.

What are the ways I can give?

You can mail checks to the church (900 Lincolnshire Pl., Coralville, IA 52241), use the Donate button on the website (icdisciples.org), give via electronic funds transfer (by filling out a form the church office can provide) or use your own bank's "bill pay" feature to give your offering.

How can I give special offerings?

If you are giving to a special offering, please make sure to designate that on the memo line of your check or the memo box in our electronic giving.