

**Leesburg United Methodist Church**  
**LUMC Post-COVID Recovery Policy - Worship/Ministry Activities for Summer, 2021**

June 3, 2021: revised August 3, 2021

1] *“At this time” ie, as of the revision fate of this document. In this very fluid and somewhat uncertain time, we are moving forward with our decision-making based on the best information available. These guidelines reflect our effort to protect the health of all, while also allowing more accessibility to worship, fellowship, and other ministry activities. We will continue to evaluate external and internal conditions and we must be ready to respond accordingly. “At this time” also means: “stay flexible” as we anticipate additional changes toward normalcy as Fall approaches.*

2) *“may” – just because the best guidance from federal, state, local, and Church judicatories say we can do certain things, does not mean that we should. All must be evaluated and filtered through the lens of what is best for our congregation – ESPECIALLY THE MOST VULNERABLE among us. This is not about personal preference. As followers of Christ, we are called to set aside “what I want” in order to protect “the least of these”, as we communicate the good news of Christ to all*

As more and more of our members get vaccinated, we are moving forward toward the resumption of pre-COVID activities and events. Our Bishop Sharma Lewis and the VA Conference Healthy Church Team (now known as the PRG for Post COVID Re-entry Group) have helped us to navigate uncharted territory with respect to this pandemic. However, as the pandemic is ever changing we will continue to amend and reinstate certain health protocols to keep our congregation and the wider community safe.

Bishop Lewis has given permission to local churches, as of May 29, to make our own decisions consistent with the CDC guidelines, the Virginia Department of Health, and the Loudoun Health Department.

Here’s the latest from:

Loudoun County - <https://www.loudoun.gov/Blog.aspx?CID=30>

VA Department of Health - <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/>

The Center for Disease Control (CDC)- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

With these guidelines in mind, and at this time, Leesburg United Methodist Church is amending our previous requirements for in-person worship and ministry activities as follows. The best medical advice at this time has emphasized that while the risk of fully-vaccinated persons getting and transmitting the virus is extremely low, it is still possible. Unvaccinated persons have a much higher risk both of being infected, and transmitting COVID-19 to others. Finally, children under 12 still do not have an approved vaccine to help protect them. With all of this in mind, and taking to heart the latest recommendations from the CDC, our LUMC PRG recommends the following:

## In-person worship

1. Continue to provide hand sanitizer at all entrances.
2. Holy Communion – we will continue to use pre-packaged communion for in-person worship
3. Baptism – We are now celebrating the sacrament of Baptism now that our clergy have been fully vaccinated.
4. Worship:
  - a. All persons – vaccinated or unvaccinated - attending indoor worship, or participating in other indoor programs, meetings, events at LUMC are strongly encouraged to wear a mask (over the age of 2).
  - b. As in 4.a., all persons should practice physical distancing.
  - c. As in 4.a., all persons should refrain from physical contact with others.
  - d. Fully vaccinated persons may preach or lead worship without a mask indoor or outdoor, provided they are physically distanced 6 ft, and wearing a face shield indoors.
  - e. As in 4.a., all persons may sing only when masked. Those leading singing should be 25 feet from the congregation and shall wear either a mask or a face shield
  - f. As in 4.a., all are encouraged to register ahead of time and/or check in prior to worship/the activity for tracking purposes.
    - g.1 This includes responding to the health questions.
    - g.2 While we ask for vaccination status, this is optional. However, this helps us know the percentage of our membership who have been vaccinated, thus enabling better decisions with regard to the safety of all.
5. **In General:**
  - a. Fellowship/Hospitality – at this time, we will not be serving refreshments except for pre-packaged foods or purchased from local restaurants/grocery stores (eg. Dunkin' Donuts, Starbucks, Wegmans, Giant, etc.); or catered foods.  
The PRG will be coming up with additional guidance for this.
  - b. With the greatly reduced risk of transmission by contact with various surfaces, we are allowing bathroom use during in-person, indoor activities. persons using bathrooms should follow hand washing guidelines (wash for 20 seconds).
  - c. Our indoor capacity is now based on the standard occupancy restrictions for the space.

Also, during indoor worship, we will set the HVAC fans to “On” versus “Auto” and leave the rear doors of the sanctuary open to ensure a constant fresh air flow through the sanctuary, since our HVAC air handlers bring in 20% fresh air.

## Ministry Activities

1. General guidelines for ministry activities should follow the guidelines above for worship as applicable, unless otherwise noted below.
2. No overnight activities this summer.
3. For outdoor activities, vaccinated children, youth, and adults do not need a mask.
4. For outdoor activities, non-vaccinated children, youth, and adults who have been through the check-in process do not need a mask – but may still wear one.
5. Ministries are asked to submit their MAP (Mitigation Assistance Plan) to the pastor and to the Post-Covid Re-entry Group for review two weeks prior to the activity, making use of the MAP template and questions from the VA Conference.
6. For ongoing activities (eg. a Discipleship Group, UM Women Circle), once the initial MAP has been reviewed that will be sufficient unless a group makes changes in their activities.
7. Capacity is now not limited by COVID restrictions.
8. Ministry activities involving children and non-vaccinated persons should provide for pre-registration utilizing the Healthy Acknowledgment Questions in order to assess health at the time of the activity.
9. Pre-packaged or catered food is preferred over bring your own or pot-luck.

Thank you, Leesburg United Methodist Church, for keeping one another safe!

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*Original plan approved by the CLT on June 3, 2021; latest revisions approved by CLT August 9, 2021.*