

## **Re-Entry Policy – COVID-19**

We begin by remembering that this is not a process of re-opening our church because we never closed. We've been worshiping, serving, and growing before the pandemic outbreak, we've continued during the pandemic, and we will keep doing these things together into the future. The following document outlines how we will re-enter our physical building and resume group gatherings for worship and ministry.

We desire to provide a place where all of our community can gather in worship in a manner that is safe and healthy. We are committed to loving each other and our neighbors by taking every precaution possible to ensure greater health and well-being for all. Toward that end, the Session of Redmond Presbyterian Church (RPC) will continually assess the public health situation to do our best at ensuring the health and safety of our community. The Session's decisions are subject to change based on new information as it becomes available.

We recognize that returning to in-person worship is important for so many of us and we deeply desire to be together. We pray, together, for wisdom and patience as we navigate this process. We pray for open eyes and tender hearts to be ready for the new day that God is inviting us into. We will say "yes" to this invitation into a new way of being church with grace, forbearance, generosity, and love.

The following procedure policy was developed by the Session considering the advice of the CDC, the King County Health Department, the Seattle Presbytery, and the Presbyterian Church USA. This process will be a phased process that will move as the data on the COVID-19 outbreak moves. Our progress may not always be linear, and we may have to return to previous phases if the outbreak worsens in our area. While we will look to our County and governmental agencies for guidance RPC's progress through these phases may follow or may lag behind the public's progress through the Phased Re-Opening of public spaces. RPC's Session will always seek to make the best decisions for the health of our congregation and community.

### **Phase One:**

This is where we are currently (June, 2020)

- Hold worship services online only. Record services from home.
- All meetings, small groups, and bible studies also meet online.
- Service-based ministry (Food Box Program) continues on-site using safety protocols and addressing essential needs.
- Minimal drop-in staffing for essential operations (deposits, mail processing, communications, etc.)

### **Phase Two:**

We will look for guidance from the King Co. Health Department, the Office of the Governor, the Seattle Presbytery, and the CDC to move to this next phase.

- Continue holding online worship services only.

- Consider recording services from the sanctuary, while maintaining at least 6 ft. of space between people – and greater distance between those who are singing.
- Bible Studies, Small Groups, and Meetings continue meeting online.
- Limit office functions to essential operations. Those in the church building for whatever reason should wear masks and staff should ensure that all surfaces are regularly sanitized.
- Any individual who has had symptoms related to COVID-19 (fever, cough, respiratory troubles, etc..) within past 72 hours will be asked to not enter any RPC building.

### **Phase Three:**

We will look for guidance from the King Co. Health Department, the Office of the Governor, the Seattle Presbytery, and the CDC to move to this next phase. This shift will occur based on a re-evaluation of the situation using the same criteria as Phase Two. This shift will also require careful observance of physical distancing recommendations on an ongoing basis.

- Continue holding online worship and recording from the church sanctuary. Begin recording with participation from small groups of people.
- Small Groups and Bible Studies are encouraged to meet online but may begin meeting in the church building. Attendance must be recorded for all gatherings, distancing measures must be observed, and all vulnerable populations are encouraged to remain home. If groups choose to gather in-person they are strongly encouraged to also provide online connection for those members of the group who are not able to be physically present.
- Any individual who has had symptoms related to COVID-19 (fever, cough, respiratory troubles, etc..) within past 72 hours will be asked to not enter any RPC building.

### **Phase Four:**

We will look guidance from the King Co. Health Department, the Office of the Governor, the Seattle Presbytery, and the CDC to move to this next phase. Again, this shift will be based on Session's re-evaluation of the situation as it pertains to RPC specifically.

#### **Worship:**

- Begin holding in-person worship services while continuing to stream service online for anyone who does not feel safe attending in person.
- Distancing: have people spread out in sanctuary space with family units allowed to sit together. Otherwise, ensure 6 ft. of distance between chairs and rows.
- If distancing measures make it difficult for the church members to gather in the sanctuary, we may consider holding two services for a period of time to spread people out.
- Singing is among the riskier behaviors when it comes to spreading droplets/aerosols which can carry the virus a significant distance and remain suspended in the air. A cloth mask is unlikely to be enough to protect you or your

neighbor. Therefore, we will refrain from singing in the sanctuary when the congregation is gathered.

- There will be a sign-in sheet at the door so we can track who is gathered in person. This is important if someone becomes ill and we need to contact everyone who was present that day.
- Youth and Children will be encouraged to attend worship services with their families. Sunday School and Youth group will not be provided on Sunday mornings in order to limit the exposure to volunteers and young people alike. Special gatherings for these groups may take place beyond Sunday morning services.
- Any individual who has had symptoms related to COVID-19 (fever, cough, respiratory troubles, etc..) within past 72 hours will be asked to not enter any RPC building.

#### General Recommendations and Building Usage:

- On Sunday mornings the CE building classrooms will remain closed. The Sanctuary, Bathrooms (in both buildings), and Fellowship Hall will be the only rooms open to the congregation.
- We will remove communal hymnals and Bibles (bringing your Bible from home is encouraged). Instead we will use bulletins or projection screens as alternatives to these high contact items.
- Wear cloth face masks while at church, as is recommended in public spaces.
- Church Session and Deacons with teams of 10 or fewer might consider meeting in person while wearing masks and maintaining distancing measures or continue meeting online.
- It should be safer for Bible studies and small groups to meet in person. We recommend maintaining some online options for high risk individuals and those who do not feel comfortable being in public.
- Any individual who has had symptoms related to COVID-19 (fever, cough, respiratory troubles, etc..) within past 72 hours will be asked to not enter any RPC building.
- Hand washing stations will be available in both bathrooms of the main building as well as in the fellowship hall. Hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed at each main entrance to the sanctuary building.
- We will refrain from serving coffee or any food items (including communion elements) on Sunday morning until this is deemed safe by the CDC and King County Health Department.
- Church attendees will be encouraged to celebrate the sacrament of communion at home with elements they have on hand.

### **Plan of Action should someone in our congregation contract COVID-19:**

- Immediately suspend all in-person gatherings and worship services. Continue these services online. Return to Phase 1 protocols.
- Immediately communicate with the congregation through e-mail and Deacon phone calls.
- Immediately communicate with local health authorities and fully participate in all contact tracing measures.
- Have building cleaned with special attention given to high-contact surfaces.

### **Childcare Procedure for the Immediate Future:**

In the short-term families will be encouraged to attend worship together. The Prayer Library will be available as cry room or play space where adults can hear the worship service with children.

- Nursery care will only be offered under Phase 4 and beyond.
- All staff, children, and parents will be expected to wash hands before and after entering the nursery area.
- Nursery Staff will clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces each Sunday prior to the arrival of any children.
- All staff will be required to wear cloth masks
- Sick children and staff will be asked to remain home.

### **Recommended Resources:**

King Co. Health Department 4 Stage Opening process: <https://www.seattlepi.com/coronavirus/article/when-will-businesses-reopen-four-stages-15237247.php>

COVID-19 Resources for Congregations – PCUSA: <https://www.pcusa.org/covid19/>

An article by a medical expert exploring how COVID spreads:  
<https://www.erinbromage.com/post/the-risks-know-them-avoid-them>