

Hickory Flat UMC “Back Together” Plan

Hickory Flat United Methodist Congregation!!!

It has been a long 14 week quarantine and sabbatical from “in-person” public worship. The HFUMC “Back Together” Team has worked to make a plan for gathering “in-person” to worship and be in ministry. Please know that plans may change though. When we entered this period of response to COVID-19, we discovered how quickly we can change worship opportunities, adapt to online classes and groups, and be engaged in critical missions and outreach. It will take absolute intentionality to reconvene phases of “in-person” worship, classes, and ministries.

First Priority is that we need to covenant with one another to maintain those practices which, to the best of our abilities, lessen the chance of future, mutual infection of COVID-19. The CDC guidelines are well known and do not need repeating. The guidelines established by the State of Georgia are fluid and everchanging. The North Georgia Conference has offered insight as well.

Taking all this into account, in order to offer “in-person” worship, HFUMC will adhere to the first of Wesley’s Three Simple Rules, “**Do no harm**” as well as a few other guiding principles:

- Be Safe & Proactive – making plans and guidelines
- Be Faithful & Flexible – being compassionate and adaptive

***** In-Person Worship is scheduled to begin July 5 *****

The shift to online only worship was quick and is now a new, permanent, and effective ministry of HFUMC! Go Team!!! Live broadcasts, pre-recorded formats, and interactive Online & Livestream Worship (Facebook Live and YouTube) will continue to be available. Weekly worship will be at 10am each Sunday with recordings available on YouTube Sunday afternoons.

Guidelines for faithful & compassionate “in-person” worship:

- Our Host Team will actively assist everyone on campus so that we accomplish social distancing from arrival to door to seat to restroom to departure because HFUMC is a loving, grace-filled, safe, contact free zone! Please respect the direction of your Host.
- We are encouraging those “at risk” to continue to worship online if possible until personal assurances are satisfied. “In-Person” worship is not required. Be safe! *(If you are experiencing any symptoms of illness, please continue to join us online.)*
- “In-person” worship will be limited to 100 persons. Modifications and options will be added as needed in future weeks. Pre-registration is expected via the Sign-up Genius link each week. *(Call the church office if you need assistance.)*
- Everyone must enter/exit through the Gathering Space doors to access the Sanctuary. All other entrances will remain locked. Doors will be unlocked & propped open for entry at 9:30am.

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- Masks will be expected for attendees to restrict infecting others and social distancing maintained for all "in-person," on campus gatherings at HFUMC. (*The use of masks is still being encouraged by the CDC for the limitation of Coronavirus spread.*)
- Family members of the same household should sit together, but non-family members must maintain social distancing standards. Our Host Team will serve to assist everyone with seating upon arrival to achieve social distancing in the sanctuary.
- Offering baskets will be available in the Gathering Space as you enter/exit the Sanctuary. Bulletins, bibles, and hymnals will not be available at this time.
- Please refrain from shaking hands or any other form of physical contact greetings. Consider the power of an “Air Hug” or smile to make someone’s day!
- After the service is over, we will dismiss one row at a time. You are invited to mingle and visit outside.

FAQs

What about groups and classes? Childcare & Nursery?

We will not offer “in-person” Sunday School, youth/children’s activities, or childcare until a later date. Our Adult Classes are currently meeting at various times via Zoom. Youth and Children are meeting throughout the week at various times. Watch the website.

What about singing? What if the Congregation sings softly or hums in their mask?

Unfortunately, that is not a recommendation we can give at this moment in time. We encourage individuals for the short-term to listen & absorb the music as singing is considered a “super-spreader.” *There is emerging science that indicates that Covid19 can be aerosolized and the particles can penetrate a mask and hang in the air for 8 to 10 minutes. Right now, the hypothesis of certain scientists is that singing can be as dangerous as coughing or sneezing.* Also, softly is a relative term that means different things to a professional vs a member of the congregation.

LOOKING FOR COVID-19 UPDATES?

There are numerous resources available to learn more about the coronavirus. The links below are not meant to be exhaustive, but will provide information as details are rapidly changing.

- [COVID-19 Testing Site Information](#) (PDF)
- [CDC Coronavirus Webpage](#)
- [GA Department of Public Health](#)
- [Cherokee County COVID-19 Webpage](#)

Thank you for committing to these practices and it is good to be “Back Together” again!

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