

What to Expect for In-Person Worship at Smyrna First United Methodist Church

Welcome back to in-person worship at Smyrna First United Methodist Church as we resume services on June 21 with an 8:30 am modern service and an 11 am traditional service in the sanctuary. We will not have fellowship time or Sunday school at this time. If you are not comfortable returning to worship quite yet, our services will be live-streamed to our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB4vzJ1Yme4p3k2nvxu9dpw> for both services. Staff and leadership have been working hard to prepare for this day. We have prayerfully considered conference, CDC, and other public health guidelines as well as your concerns and preferences from survey results. Our worship services will look different for a while as we strive to take preventative measures to do our best to care for your health and well-being while offering transformative and uplifting worship services. Here's what you need to know:

Preparing for Worship

- Evaluate you and your family for signs of illness.
Do you have a fever, cough or congestion, difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell, or body aches within the last 48 hours? If you are sick, please stay home and worship online or seek medical attention as needed.
- Bring your mask or face covering.
We are asking everyone to wear face coverings during worship. If you do not have one, the church can provide you with one. We wear face coverings to prevent spreading the virus to others in case we are asymptomatic but still carriers.
- Bring a pen or pencil.
The pews will have no pens or pencils, so bring one to fill out the attendance registration bulletin insert or to take notes during worship.
- Bring your Bible.
Pew Bibles have also been removed, so bring your Bible from home or electronic device with the Bible to use during church.
- Realize we are not initially offering a nursery or children's church.
Children will receive a worship pack to help engage them in worship. You are also welcomed to bring a special toy or activity they may prefer to quietly do. We are delighted to include your children in our whole worship service.
- Use the restroom before leaving home.
Restrooms are available, but we seek to minimize their use as much as possible.

Arriving for Worship

- Please enter the sanctuary through the main doors at the narthex.

The side doors are also available for those needing a handicapped accessible entrance.

- A table will be set up outside with a hand sanitizing station, extra face coverings, and some guidelines of what to expect during worship. Someone will be there to greet you and answer any questions you may have.
- The doors will be open before services to avoid frequent touching of doors.
- Please observe signage with reminders of guidelines such as practicing social distancing and wearing face coverings.
- The sanctuary will be thoroughly cleaned before you arrive for **both** services.
- Ushers will not be distributing bulletins. If you desire a paper bulletin, there will be some bulletins (along with offering envelopes) fanned out on a table in the sanctuary. You may also simply use the monitors in the sanctuary to follow along during the service.
- Please refrain from mingling, handshakes, and hugs.
- Hand sanitizer and additional face coverings will also be available on a table as you enter the sanctuary and at side exit doors.
- Children may pick up a worship pack as they enter the sanctuary.
- As you enter, please find a pew that is not blocked with a white ribbon. We will use every other pew. Please do not move the ribbons. Please sit together with your family at the end of a pew. Make sure you maintain at least six feet between you and others outside of your household. Ushers are available to assist you in this process.

During Worship

- The pastor, liturgist, and musicians will wear masks when among the congregation on the floor level. However, they will remove them when spaced out and far from the congregation and while actively singing, playing, or speaking during worship.
- We will not pass attendance pads. Instead, we ask you to fill out a registration slip in your bulletin and leave in your seat after worship, or complete our convenient online attendance form. (A link will be provided.)
- We will not pass offering plates. Instead, we ask you to take advantage of one of our electronic giving options or proceed to an offering station in the sanctuary during the offertory as the ushers direct. You may also leave your financial offering at one of our offering stations before or after worship.
- For music, we will not have congregational singing during services. We will have a scaled-back praise band of no more than four people well-spaced as they lead worship. You can also expect special instrumental music, solos, small ensembles, and recordings of the choir during the traditional service.
- We will not have a typical passing of the peace time. However, we will have a brief “moment of hospitality” during the service when we may wave or otherwise share a gesture of greeting and welcome with those around us without leaving our pews.

- During the children's message, children will not gather at the front of the church to listen to the message. They will remain with their families in their pews for the whole service. There will be no nursery or children's church at this time.
- You may come forward to the chancel rail to pray during the song of response after the message. As you do so, please be mindful of social distancing at the chancel rail.

At the Conclusion of Worship

- The pastor will exit through the side doors after the benediction and will be available to greet you from a distance outside.
- Ushers will open the side doors and dismiss people by pew according to social distancing guidelines. You will also exit via the side doors in the sanctuary.
- Please continue to observe social distancing guidelines while on campus.

We are so grateful for your support and patience as we navigate these uncharted waters doing our best to care for you and offer worship that honors God. We are also grateful for the hard work of the Tennessee Conference's reopening task force that has provided us with guidelines for resuming in-person worship. Please remember that these are temporary guidelines meant to care for you and avoid doing harm as we worship together. We will continue to monitor developments related to COVID-19 and make adjustments as necessary.