

EFFECTIVE 9-14-20, JIPC'S REOPENING TASK FORCE CONFIRMED THAT WE REMAIN IN TRANSMISSION PHASE 2 BUT CAN BEGIN TO LOOSEN SOME OF THE GATHERING RESTRICTIONS. IN-PERSON GATHERINGS ARE NOW BASED ON OCCUPANCY, AVAILABILITY, AND WILLINGNESS OF PARTICIPANTS TO PHYSICAL DISTANCE THEMSELVES AND WEAR MASKS. THE TASK FORCE REMINDS OUR CONGREGATION THAT WE ARE IN A FLUID SITUATION AND THIS STATUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON TRANSMISSION RATES IN OUR COMMUNITY AND REGION.

This was ratified by JIPC's Session on 9-15-20. This document is being revised and updated as quickly as possible.

Church family and friends

Following is the adopted full policy guiding and governing our return to in-person meetings both on and off campus. Much prayerful work has gone into this and the work of the entire task group is deeply appreciated. Please contact the church or one of our pastors to help with any questions you may have.

JIPC – Returning to Congregational Gatherings

All recommendations are based on the guidance in the accompanying document – please read for full details.

Recommendation:

1. The Leadership Council endorse this document for use as guidance during the COVID 19 pandemic
2. A task force of healthcare professionals from the congregation will be commissioned to provide weekly updates to Leadership Council regarding current pandemic PHASE in the Charleston area

As of **6/3/20**, we are in transmission PHASE 2 (minimal to moderate transmission of COVID-19) and can begin to offer modified congregational and small group gatherings of ten (10) people or less.

- a. We can encourage small groups meeting outdoors, such as in people's yards.
 - b. We also plan to offer mid-week prayer services in the sanctuary with reservations made online (such as Sign Up Genius), one service occurring in the day time and one in the evening (times to be determined). Depending upon demand, we may increase the number of these services.
3. The Leadership Council will study and determine how best to implement COVID 19 mitigation measures as outlined by the CDC (cleaning, hand hygiene supplies, mask availability, signage, encouraging people to stay home when ill)
 4. The Leadership Council will develop plans in case of staff member or congregation member COVID 19 positivity
 5. ~~The Leadership Council will not plan to return to Sunday morning worship until we reach PHASE 3 (none to minimal transmission of the virus).~~ On 9-14-20 and 9-15-20, the JIPC staff was directed to develop a plan for in-person worship services to be held outside, following physical-distancing and other recommendations.

Returning to Congregational Gatherings

Proposal: James Island Presbyterian Church

- As we continue to realize and adapt to the implications of the Covid-19 Pandemic at James Island Presbyterian Church, we have proposed the following phased approach to returning to congregational gatherings.
- **STRUCTURE:** The overall structure of this plan transitions dependent on public health guidelines based on transmission rates of COVID 19 in our community in the categories of:
“none to minimal”, “minimal to moderate”, “substantial”.
 - **Phase 1: Substantial Transmission**
 - **NO IN-PERSON CONGREGATIONAL GATHERINGS**
 - **Phase 2: Minimal to Moderate Transmission**
 - **Modified congregational and small group gatherings**
 - **Phase 3: None to Minimal Transmission**
 - **Modified congregational and group gatherings**
 - **Phase 4: Recovery**
 - **Return to normal operations**
- **TIMING:** It is our desire to resume congregational gatherings as soon as is safe to do so. Instead of setting a calendar and hoping the virus will comply, the transition between phases in this plan is based upon the report of a downward trend in reported cases of the COVID-19 virus in our area and clearance from medical authorities to resume activities that put participants at a lower risk of contracting the virus. Knowing that this is a fluid situation, we may have to transition between phases several times until restrictions are completely lifted. A task force of health professionals within our congregation will advise church leadership weekly on COVID-19 phases until such time as officials deem the pandemic resolved.
- **SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS:** We recognize that there will be unforeseen circumstances that will arise in the coming months. These situations will be addressed individually by the JIPC session/council. We also recognize that there are members of our congregation who will be unable to return to congregational gatherings due to health concerns and personal circumstances. We encourage all members of JIPC to prayerfully consider their own situation and support each individual and family’s discernment of how to respond to the pandemic.

PHASE 1: Substantial Transmission

INDICATORS:

- MUSC Epidemiology/DHEC report indicates substantial transmission in the Charleston area • CDC guidelines and local governing bodies restrict or prohibit small and large group gatherings.

RESTRICTIONS:

- No official in-person gatherings of groups within the congregation.

METHODS FOR MINISTRY:

- Continue enhanced on-line worship with excellence.
- Continue Zoom vehicle for small groups, meetings, etc.
- Encourage individual members of the congregation to reach out to one another to maintain connections.
- Engage in individual/family mission and outreach ministries while following social distancing guidelines.

PHASE 2: MINIMUM TO MODERATE TRANSMISSION

(Per the CDC: For organizations that serve high-risk populations, cancel gatherings of more than 10 people)

Our begin date for PHASE 2 is Monday, June 15, 2020.

INDICATORS:

- As defined by MUSC Epidemiology Report/DHEC
- CDC guidelines and local governing bodies loosen restrictions for outdoor small group gatherings.

RESTRICTIONS:

- Authorize optional small group gatherings with social distancing and guidelines. *Outdoors may be safer than indoors:*
 - Groups of up to 10
 - No shared food
 - Maintain 6-foot social distancing protocol
 - Maintain HVAC airflow at all times
 - Wearing masks is encouraged
 - Space must be thoroughly disinfected prior to the next group's use.
 - If possible, allow for 4 days between small group gatherings in the same space.

METHODS FOR MINISTRY:

- Continue enhanced on-line worship with excellence.
- Continue Zoom vehicle for small groups, meetings, etc. with outdoor options/alternatives also available.
- Require sign-ups in advance for any outdoor small group gatherings to limit size.
- Encourage individual members of the congregation to reach out to one another to maintain connections.
- Encourage small groups to partner for mission and outreach ministries outdoors while following social distancing guidelines.

PHASE 3: NONE TO MINIMAL TRANSMISSION

INDICATORS:

- As defined by MUSC Epidemiology report/DHEC
- CDC guidelines and local governing bodies loosen restrictions for small group gatherings indoors.

RESTRICTIONS:

- No gatherings of >250 people (or 50% occupancy of the building)

- Authorize optional small or larger group gatherings with social distancing and guidelines. *Outdoors may be safer than indoors:*
 - No shared food
 - Maintain 6-foot social distancing protocol
 - Maintain HVAC airflow at all times
 - Wearing masks is encouraged
- Space must be thoroughly disinfected prior to the next group's use.
- If possible, allow for 4 days between small group gatherings in the same space.

METHODS FOR MINISTRY:

- Continue enhanced on-line worship with excellence.
- Continue Zoom vehicle for small groups, meetings, etc. with indoor options/alternatives also available.
- Encourage individual members of the congregation to reach out to one another to maintain connections.
- Encourage small groups to partner for mission and outreach ministries while following social distancing guidelines.
- Offer various one-time gatherings other than Sunday morning worship for larger groups such as prayer services, AA group gatherings, Sunday School Gatherings, etc. No nursery, coffee fellowship, or congregation-wide Sunday School classes.
- Begin offering one modified public service on Sunday, possibly with a separate option for children to worship with their families around tables in the gym.
- Reintroduce larger group options for mission and outreach ministries while following social distancing guidelines.

LEVEL 4: RECOVERY

RETURN TO MOSTLY NORMAL PRACTICES FOR CORPORATE WORSHIP

INDICATORS:

- CDC guidelines and local governing bodies lift restrictions for large group gatherings and/or a vaccine or therapeutic treatment is available to mitigate the risk of gathering for worship.

RESTRICTIONS:

- Restrictions will depend upon CDC Guidelines for sharing food, wearing masks, etc.

METHODS FOR MINISTRY:

- Resume LiveStream worship options.
- Offer a few Zoom options for small group ministry and meetings if desired by members of the congregation.
- Resume normal schedule for Sunday School. Restrictions for Wednesday Night Live and Coffee Fellowship will be addressed at that time.
- Resume Nursery if advisable.

- Resume worship with two services and choirs if able.
- Discern current needs for Mission and Outreach.