



COTTAGE GROVE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS PLAN

CGUCC is committed to providing a safe and healthy church for all our staff, members, guests, and visitors. To ensure we have a safe and healthy workplace and place to worship, CGUCC has developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our staff are all responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our church and communities, and that requires full cooperation among our staff. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of all persons in our church.

The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is administered by the Reopening Task Committee, who maintains the overall authority and responsibility for the plan. However, staff is equally responsible for supporting, implementing, complying with and providing recommendations to further improve all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. CGUCC's staff have our full support in enforcing the provisions of this plan.

CGUCC is serious about safety and health and protecting its staff, members, guests and visitors. Staff involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. We have involved our staff in this process by having staff participate as members of the Reopening Task Committee:

CGUCC's COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows the industry guidance developed by the state of Minnesota, which is based upon Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines for COVID-19, Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MNOSHA) statutes, rules and standards, and Minnesota's relevant and current executive orders. It addresses:

- ensuring sick staff stay home and prompt identification and isolation of sick persons;
- social distancing – staff must be at least six-feet apart;
- staff hygiene and source controls;
- church building and ventilation protocol;

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

An inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists anywhere people are present. COVID-19 is an extremely contagious disease that can lead to severe illness and death. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, people over the age of 65 and those with underlying medical conditions are especially vulnerable to COVID-19. CGUCC has undertaken precautionary cleaning, disinfecting and implemented social distancing guidelines to help reduce the risk of exposure. However, CGUCC cannot guarantee that visitors are 100% safe from exposure to COVID-19. Therefore, CGUCC encourages those who may be more vulnerable to COVID-19 to continue to worship online rather than in-person. Attendance at on-site services is at your own risk.

- church cleaning and disinfection protocol;
- drop-off, pick-up and delivery practices and protocol; and
- communications and training practices and protocol.

CGUCC has reviewed and incorporated the industry guidance applicable to our church provided by the state of Minnesota for the development of this plan, including the following industry guidance for places of worship. Other conditions and circumstances included in the industry guidance and addressed in the plan that are specific to our church include:

- additional protections and protocols for members, guests and visitors;
- additional protections and protocols for personal protective equipment (PPE);
- additional protections and protocol for access and assignment;
- additional protections and protocol for sanitation and hygiene;
- additional protections and protocols for handwashing;
- additional protections and protocol for distancing and barriers;
- additional protections and protocols for managing occupancy;
- additional protocols to limit face-to-face interaction; and
- additional protections for receiving or exchanging payment.

Ensure sick staff stay home and prompt identification and isolation of sick persons

Staff has been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess staff's health status prior to entering the church and for staff to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms. Staff have been advised of COVID-19 symptoms and have been advised to stay home if a staff person becomes ill, seek testing upon advice of the staff person's medical provider, and notify the pastor of the staff person's status. Staff will not be allowed to return to work until cleared by a medical provider or until such staff person successfully tests negative for COVID-19. If the Pastor becomes ill, he will follow the same process as staff persons but he will notify the current Council president who will work with Council members on the handling of church matters during the Pastor's absence. Any staff person who becomes ill while on the church premises will be isolated until such time as that person can be sent home.

CGUCC has also implemented a policy for informing staff if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at the church requiring them to quarantine for the required amount of time. Any staff person who is exposed to COVID-19 while on church property will immediately be notified via telephone either by the Pastor or Council president.

In addition, a policy has been implemented to protect the privacy of staff's health status and health information. In compliance with the regulations of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), if a staff member exposes others to COVID-19, the staff member's personal health information will be kept confidential to the greatest extent possible when notifying others of their exposure. Staff names will be withheld whenever possible, and conveyance of medical information will be limited to advising individuals they have been exposed to COVID-19 while on church property.

Social distancing – Remaining at least six-feet apart

Social distancing of at least six feet will be implemented and maintained between staff, members, guests, and visitors in the church through the following engineering and administrative controls:

- **Staff:** Staff have been instructed to remain at least six-feet apart at all times while on church property. If possible, staff will remain within their own designated offices and will wear masks any time they exit those offices and potentially come into contact with other individuals. When possible, staff will work from home.
- **Worship Services:**
 - **Upon entering the church:** Only one entrance will be used for entry to and exit from the church. Ushers will be present at the door, encouraging social distancing and signage regarding the same will be posted. In addition, a special walking path has been created to allow flow into the sanctuary and congregants will be escorted to their seats by ushers.
 - **Seating in the sanctuary:** Portions of the sanctuary have been blocked off to ensure proper distancing from the altar at the front and from seating for the sound technician and ushers at the back. In addition, ushers have been trained on how to stagger seating so that all congregants attending the service will be seated at least six-feet apart. The exception is family units that will be allowed to sit together. At no time will occupancy exceed the percentage allowed under MDH guidelines in force on any given day.
 - **Exiting the sanctuary:** Ushers will dismiss congregants by row, starting from the back in order to maintain proper social distancing.
 - **Fellowship:** After service fellowship is discontinued until further notice and individuals attending the service should plan to leave the church promptly at the conclusion of the service.
 - **Communion:** Communion will be administered via individual communion kits that congregants will pick up as they enter the sanctuary, thus allowing for each person to take communion without leaving their seat during the service.
 - **Restrooms:** Restrooms on the main floor will be available but limited to emergency use only.
 - **Other access:** Access will be limited to the sanctuary, the church office, main floor restrooms and gathering area. Access to all other rooms/areas of the church area will be closed off by doors or other barricades.

Hygiene and source controls

Basic infection prevention measures are being implemented at our church at all times. Staff are instructed to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of their shift, prior to any mealtimes and after using the restroom. All members, guests, and visitors to the church are required to wash or sanitize their hands prior to or immediately upon entering the church. Hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) are at entrances and locations in the church so they can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled. Each person entering the church will be required to sanitize their hands and wear a face mask. Extra masks will be available for those who forget to bring a mask. **NOTE: Anyone who fails to adhere to the mask/hand sanitizing policy will be asked to leave.** If you are unable to wear a mask or have an underlying medical condition, we encourage you to worship with us online. Please contact the church office in advance if

you have an underlying medical condition and want to attend worship so that special accommodations can be made.

Staff, members, guests and visitors are being instructed to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and to avoid touching their face, particularly their mouth, nose and eyes, with their hands. Staff, members, guests and visitors are expected to dispose of tissues in provided trash receptacles and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward. Respiratory etiquette will be demonstrated on posters and supported by making tissues and trash receptacles available to all workers and other persons entering the church. CDC and MDH posters demonstrating proper handwashing, coughing and social distancing have been posted throughout the church.

Church building and ventilation protocol

Operation of the church building, including necessary sanitation, assessment and maintenance of building systems, including water, plumbing, electrical, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems have been evaluated and inspected. All systems currently meet guidelines established by MDH. The maximum amount of fresh air is being brought into the church and ventilation systems are being properly used and maintained. Steps are also being taken to minimize air flow blowing across people. Separate furnaces and air conditioning units for each section of the church (only operate in sections being used). No ceiling fans will be turned on at this time.

Church cleaning and disinfection protocol

Regular practices of cleaning and disinfecting have been implemented, including a schedule for routine cleaning and disinfecting of work surfaces, equipment and areas in the work environment, including restrooms, fellowship hall, meeting rooms, checkout stations, and drop-off and pick-up locations. Frequent cleaning and disinfecting is being conducted of high-touch areas, including phones, keyboards, touch screens, controls, door handles, elevator panels, railings, copy machines, etc. The church will be cleaned prior to the church reopening with Vital Oxide, a disinfecting soluble disk that will thoroughly disinfect all surfaces. It will also be used when any person visiting or working at the church tests positive for COVID-19 and any other time deemed appropriate by the pastor or church custodian. In addition, In-Cide industrial disinfectant will be used by the custodian during scheduled cleaning. Cleaning will occur prior to: any event such as a funeral; Sunday worship; and the Farmers Market each week. Additional cleaning products used regularly include chlorine bleach, disinfecting wipes, and disinfecting sprays such as Lysol spray. The custodian will train new staff members or volunteers on cleaning practices prior to their first cleaning shift.

Appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfecting supplies have been purchased and are available for use in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets and manufacturer specifications, and are being used with required personal protective equipment for the product. All cleaning products used on church property are EPA approved cleaning products.

Drop-off, pick-up and delivery practices and protocol

Items that are dropped off at the church should be left by the front entrance, including UPS/FedEx deliveries or items brought to the church by members of the congregation.

Communications and training practices and protocol

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was communicated via email and/or first-class mail to staff and members of the congregation on July 24, 2020. It has also been posted to the CGUCC website, and necessary training was provided. Additional communication and training will be ongoing whenever a new person joins the staff or volunteers to serve (such as ushers, musicians, etc.). Training will be provided to all staff who did not receive the initial training and prior to initial assignment.

Instructions will be communicated to all staff, members, guests and visitors about protections and protocols, including: 1) social distancing protocols and practices; 2) practices for hygiene and respiratory etiquette; 3) recommendations or requirements regarding the use of masks, by staff, members, guests and visitors. All staff, members, guests and visitors will also be advised not to enter the church if they are experiencing symptoms or have contracted COVID-19.

Staff are expected to monitor how effective the program has been implemented and report any deficiencies to either the pastor, church president or a member of the Reopening Task Committee. All staff are to take an active role and collaborate in carrying out the various aspects of this plan, and update the protections, protocols, work-practices and training as necessary. This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan has been certified by CGUCC staff and the plan was posted throughout the church and made readily available to staff on July 24, 2020. It will be updated as necessary by Reopening Task Committee.

Certified by:

_____/s/_____

Midge Youngquist, President
on behalf of the entire CGUCC Board

Date: July 24, 2020