



FAIRHOPE

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

FUMC Phased Reopening Plan Details

Throughout all phases and for the foreseeable future, our church will continue to make ministry available online as much as possible so that those who need to remain at home during this time can stay connected. In developing plans for re-opening in phases, we have adopted public-health and hygiene “best practices” to manage risk and have come together in prayerful deliberation to reach consensus regarding our goals of safety and inclusion.

Note: While any person of any age group is at some risk for COVID-19, we encourage those considered at high risk for complications to remain at home for the near term. Our ministry teams will continue to use alternate forms of outreach and connection to ensure that all are enveloped in our love, moving forward together as a caring community.

*While this phased reopening represents the careful planning of church staff and volunteers, reopening dates are all subject to change based on health metrics.

PHASE ONE – Online Plus (ongoing)

Many church ministries have been active during the months since in-person church services were suspended.

Online Worship and Adult Programming

- Weekly Worship Services stream online at 11 am each Sunday and alternate between Traditional and Contemporary Worship.
- Wednesday night Bible Study is presented by Dr. Darren McClellan.
- Monday morning devotionals are presented weekly, hosted by Rev. Laura Parker.
- Summer Book Club sessions with Rev. Parker are offered monthly (June, July and August.)
- Adult Sunday School classes available through Zoom.

Caring Ministries

- Cards and gifts have been delivered to all our church family during this time to stay connected.
- Support groups have continued to meet virtually through Zoom sessions.
- Sewing Relief Ministry has actively assisted in the efforts to provide over a thousand masks and hundreds of gowns to the community at large.
- Knit and Crochet Ministry continues to support our church family.
- Stephen Ministers have continued to contact our members to assess their needs.
- The Prayer Ministry Team is responding daily to prayer concerns and needs.
- Durable Medical Loan Closet and Tough Dogs Cancer Chemo Bag Ministries are continuing to meet the needs in our community upon requests.
- Lord’s Pantry is partnering with other local food ministries to respond to community food needs such as Rotary Youth Club.

Children’s and Student Ministries

- Sunday School-type activities are provided for families to use at home.
- Swift children’s ministry (5th & 6th graders) meet on Zoom weekly.
- Gifts have been dropped at door for children.
- Community group meetings and other online activities have been provided for our youth.

Community Outreach

- Church staff, in partnership with many dedicated volunteers, have worked to continue Fairhope UMC's mission to cast the light of Jesus into the world.
- Community Café has expanded its ministry and now provides 350 meals each week to our homebound and others in the community who may be in need of a food ministry.
- Food and meal distribution has moved to the Fairhope Rotary Youth Club in order to accomplish a broader reach in the community and to partner with other religious and civic organizations.
- In partnership with Borden Milk, church members are providing gallons of milk to Fairhope Rotary Youth, Meals on Wheels, and AHEPA.

PHASE TWO – Limited In-Person Gatherings (beginning late June)

Small Group Meeting Spaces on Campus/Outdoor

- Beginning June 19th, small groups and Sunday School classes are able to meet in-person outside on church grounds by reservation with appropriate social distancing.

Student Ministry Group

- Beginning in late June, student ministry groups began meeting in a limited capacity off and on-campus.
- Student community groups ("C-groups") meet in smaller numbers outdoors at host homes.
- Students are currently registering for mini-mission sessions to be held in late July. Participants must register with the church and self-transport to mission sites, must sign medical releases, and must follow conference protocol for social distancing.
- **Please note:** *Due to an increase in positive COVID 19 test results among our younger demographic, Student Ministries are pausing briefly through the natural break provided by the July 4th holiday. This will be reassessed in coming days.*

In-Person Outdoor Worship Service

- We recognize the intense need to be in worship with our church community. At a date yet to be determined, we will offer in-person worship in a limited, outdoor service that will allow congregants to join each other in a safer environment.
- Reservations will be required in order to adequately prepare for the services and to provide information for contact tracing should it become necessary.
- Space for social distancing and sanitation guidelines will be in line with recommendations made by CDC and ADPH.
- Church staff and volunteers will be on hand to assist those in attendance, to manage reservations, and to ensure that individuals and families feel comfortable worshipping together.
- Facemasks are strongly advised and if needed, will be provided onsite.
- Limited restroom facilities will be available if necessary, with cleaning supplies and procedures provided.
- Childcare and children's church will not be available.

PHASE THREE – OPEN

We haven't determined when Phase Three will begin. The church leadership will move into Phase Three with input from the UMC Annual Conference, our COVID-19 Medical Team and Reopening Readiness Team along with assessment of local health metrics regarding COVID-19 infections.

In-Person Indoor Worship Service (Planning for possible start sometime in August in conjunction with the start of public school)

- At some point in time, we will return to in-person indoor worship. Until the pandemic is clearly behind us, there is a particularly high risk of infection and transmission of COVID-19 in larger gatherings such as worship services. We will follow all the guidelines from the Alabama Department of Public Health to mitigate the risk of infection and transmission.
- The Sunday worship schedule may change to allow for more time between services for cleaning and disinfecting.
- The number of persons who can attend each service will be limited and additional services may be added at other times if needed. Seating will provide for recommended social distancing guidelines to be followed.
- Reservations will be required in order to adequately prepare for the services and to provide information for contact tracing should it become necessary.
- Facemasks are required and if needed, will be provided onsite.
- Staff and volunteers will undergo health screening and temperature checks on Sunday mornings before interacting with others.
- Children's church and nursery will most likely NOT be available during this phase. Children and students are invited and encouraged to attend Sunday worship with their families.

Adding other ministry opportunities

- During this phase, other ministries may begin to operate with approval from the church leadership.
- Currently, leaders are discussing ways their ministries could resume based on social distancing guidelines and other mitigation efforts. Online ministry offerings will continue until these ministries can return.

NOTE: *Unless otherwise noted, social distancing allows for persons who share a household to sit with each other or maintain proximity, while members from different households maintain a 6ft. distance from each other.*

