

Guide to returning to In-Person Worship

Updated July 2, 2020

Introduction

We are delighted to announce a return to in-person worship at Hanna City Presbyterian Church beginning July 5th. To ensure the safety of everyone involved, worship is going to look quite a bit different than it has in the past. Below you will find some of the most important details around what safety measures are being implemented. The Session will continue to monitor health trends and adjust this plan as needed to mitigate any unreasonable risks. We hope to work toward a more “normal” situation in the months to come, and we pray that the Lord will give us wisdom as we consider the best path forward for our church families. Please familiarize yourself with the following information before joining us on the 5th.

Personal Health & Attendance

We strongly encourage the at-risk population to continue to participate in worship from home as you are able and take advantage of the online options. “At-risk” includes individuals who are 65 or older along with those who have: chronic lung disease; moderate to severe asthma; chronic heart disease; severe obesity; diabetes; chronic kidney disease; undergoing dialysis; liver disease; or a weakened immune system.

Please do not come to church if anyone in your household has had any of the following symptoms in the past 14 calendar days (even if you have personally been asymptomatic you could be a carrier if a family member was sick): cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit, sore throat, chills, overall body aches, or loss of taste or smell. Additionally, if you have been in contact with a person with a known COVID-19 infection please quarantine yourself for 14 days and do not come to church.

If you are simply not comfortable returning to corporate worship at this time, please feel completely supported in your decision to stay home and continue to participate in worship remotely.

For those who are not able to attend in person, we will continue our digital ministry by streaming our worship services live on YouTube. The video stream will be embedded on the church website every Sunday morning. As situations allow, we encourage those unable to meet at church to participate in smaller gatherings to watch the live stream together. An elder or deacon would love to stay in contact with you periodically if you cannot or will not be attending.

A video recording of the service will be available on the church website shortly after the service ends for those who are unable to view the live stream or wish to revisit part of the service.

Entering and exiting the Building

We request that all who plan to attend a worship service to arrive about 10 minutes early. There will be a Trustee or an Elder wearing a mask stationed at all entrances to the building to hold the door for you as you enter to reduce the need for you to touch common surfaces. Once in the building, please go directly to the sanctuary to find a seat. After the benediction, you will be instructed to leave the building immediately and continued your fellowship outside. Our common spaces will be too crowded for fellowship a safe social distances.

Use of Sanctuary

In order to comply with state guidelines and to provide adequate social distancing, we will not have more than 50 people in the sanctuary at any one time (including worship leaders) through at least the end of July 2020. Additionally, seating will be restricted to every-third pew to encourage appropriate distancing between family units. Please be considerate of the peace of mind of your brother or sister in

Guide to returning to In-Person Worship

Christ by being more cautious rather than less in where you sit. We will clearly indicate which pews are to be used during a given worship service and will use different sets of pews for each service on a Sunday as an added precaution.

Considering these restrictions, we will have two services each Sunday Morning. The “Early Service” will be from 9:00 AM – 10:15 AM while the “Later Service” will be scheduled from 10:45 AM – 12:00 PM. Our intent is for the Early Service to employ increased safety measures for those who are at elevated risk or feel more comfortable with more protocols in place in our return to in-person. The Later Service will not have quite as many precautions in place.

There will be planned attendance for each service. The Elders and Deacons will initially call everyone in the congregation to register you for the service that best fits the needs of you and your family. After that, we will assume you will continue to attend that same service unless you contact the church and request a change. Below we will describe the precautions for each service.

Face Masks: Masks will be **required** for anyone over 2 years of age during congregational singing in *both services*. If you are unable to wear a mask for any reason, please refrain from singing out loud. For the *Early Service*, masks will be **required** for all attendees when entering, moving about, or exiting the building but not during the sermon when sitting. For the *Later Service*, masks are encouraged but are not required (except during congregational singing when it is required). If you begin to cough or sneeze, please wear the mask as you are able. We may opt for more strict or relaxed guidelines on masks as we move forward. If you do not have a mask, one will be provided.

Tithes and Offerings: For *both services*, collection plates will be placed inside both doors of the Sanctuary. There will be a time in the order of worship to thank God for his provision and to dedicate our gifts, but we request that gifts be placed in the plates when you are entering or leaving the building at the conclusion of the service to reduce unnecessary foot traffic and contact with common surfaces. For your convenience, you are still welcome to give electronically (<https://hcpc.churchtrac.com/give>) or by mailing a check to the church.

The Lord’s Supper: During *both services*, when we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, the Elders will serve each participant individually to reduce the need to touch common surfaces. The elders will wear face masks and sterile gloves while distributing the elements.

Hymnals and Pew Bibles: Though we recognize that recent studies suggest that the risk of infection from the virus on surfaces is minimal, because they are difficult to sanitize, all hymnals and pew bibles will be removed from the pews until further notice. You are encouraged to bring your own bible (if you don’t have one, let one of the Elders know and we will give you one to keep). All songs, scripture readings, and responsive prayers will be included either on the projection screen or in the provided weekly Worship guide, which will be placed on the pews before each service or handed out by volunteers wearing gloves and face masks.

Children’s Ministry

All in-person Children’s Ministry activities at the church are cancelled until further notice. This includes children’s Sunday School classes, Children’s Church, and the Nursery. We encourage families to bring their youngest members into the worship service - the sounds babies and little children make are a gift from God, and we welcome them with great joy.

If your child under the age of three years old is unable to remain in the worship service with us, you are welcome to take them to the nursery or nursing room. Please note that there will not be toys available

Guide to returning to In-Person Worship

in the nursery due to the associated health risk. You are welcome to bring a few toys from home for your child to use. The space will be marked to help maintain good social distancing. Parents are primarily responsible for their own children at all times. But DO seek help if you feel overwhelmed!

Cleaning and Personal Sanitation

Scheduled Cleaning: All pews, indoor hand rails, door knobs, and other “high touch” surfaces will be disinfected after every worship service, with a more complete cleaning completed weekly.

Sanitation supplies: Disinfectant wipes (or disinfectant spray and paper towels) and hand sanitizer or hand washing supplies will be available outside each entrance to the Sanctuary, and in all bathrooms. In the event that these supplies are not sufficient to disinfect a surface in need of sanitation, please notify an Elder or Trustee who will help find a suitable solution as quickly as possible.

Other Miscellaneous Notes

Personal Contact: After being physically apart for so long, we will all have a desire to greet one another with hugs or handshakes – unfortunately we must request that you maintain a safe social distance and rely solely on verbal greetings for anyone outside of your household. You are encouraged to have continued conversations once you’ve exited the building but be mindful of the comfort level of others.

Small Group Meetings: When the church is not occupied for worship services, the building will be made available upon request for small group meetings (prayer groups, bible studies, staff meetings, etc.). There will be a strict limit of one small group in the building at a time consisting of 10 or fewer people. The fellowship hall is the designated location for small group meetings. Each group will be responsible to clean/sanitize their meeting space after every use. To schedule your small group’s meeting at the church, and to receive more detailed instructions around required precautions for those meetings, please contact the church office.

**This document will be updated periodically and can be found on our church website.