

DEPT. OF HEALTH: NEW YORK FORWARD COVID-19 REOPENING SAFETY PLAN, v.2

Note: This document will be provided electronically to congregants prior to resumption of on-site indoor worship services, tentatively scheduled for late October, 2020. The document will also be posted at the church and made available to state or local health authorities in the event of an inspection.

NAME OF ORGANIZATION: New Hempstead Presbyterian Church

ADDRESS: 484 New Hempstead Rd., New City, NY 10956, Rockland County

CONTACT INFORMATION: Office telephone: (845) 354-2372; Website: www.nhpchurch.org

LEADER OF ORGANIZATION: The Rev. Dr. Lori Knight Whitehouse [Telephone: (845)362-0729]

DATE: September 18, 2020 (Phase 4 of reopening)

I. MANAGING PEOPLE

A. PHYSICAL DISTANCING

1. Encourage people to maintain 6 feet of distance between each other through signage and verbal reminders. Any time a 6 ft. distance cannot be maintained outdoors, masks or other suitable face coverings, which cover both nose and mouth, shall be worn. Masks shall be worn when indoors.
2. For outdoor services, sanitized folding chairs will be set up at 6 ft. intervals, and congregants will be directed to sit in those chairs and not move them. For those in wheelchairs, the person will be directed to a spot 6 ft. from an existing chair. Size is limited to 50 people.
3. For indoor services, congregants who are able will enter the church using the front door, pass through the narthex, then enter the sanctuary only by the center aisle. Congregants will exit the sanctuary to the rear only using the side aisles. The handicap accessible route will follow the ramp into the Colonial Room, then enter the sanctuary through the east side door. Number of congregants is limited to 33% of the building capacity or the number dictated by social distancing, whichever is smaller.
4. Any children attending worship shall remain seated with their parents/guardians for the entire service. Simple activities will be provided (e.g., take-away crayons and coloring pages).
5. For outdoor services, foot traffic will be directed from the parking lots (entry to the lots only from Old Schoolhouse Rd.) to the seating section by an usher. For indoor services, congregants will be directed to designated seating by an usher.
6. Congregants are asked not to excessively socialize before and after worship so as to maintain social distancing.

7. Colonial Room bathrooms will be available. Signs will designate traffic flow in/out of the Colonial Room and 6 ft. increments will be marked on the floors to allow for social distancing.
8. For those not comfortable attending the in-person service, rest assured that the service will still be live-streamed on YouTube as it has been prior to/during the pandemic.

II. MANAGING PLACES

A. PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)/PROTOCOLS

1. Everyone participating in an outdoor service will wear a mask unless they are separated from others by a distance of 12 ft. Masks shall be worn when indoors. Children under two and those not able to wear masks for medical reasons are exempt. Masks will be provided to anyone needing one.
2. Ushers will wear a mask and disposable gloves.
3. Plexiglas/plastic barriers will be installed as necessary and appropriate to limit contact between worship leaders and congregants.
4. No Bibles or hymnals will be available. People may bring personal Bibles for their own use during the service.
5. Single-use bulletins will be available then discarded after the service.
6. Worship leader will use a microphone to amplify the spoken part of the service.
7. Communion elements will be offered as individually wrapped/sealed items that will be distributed by Elders/Deacons who are wearing masks and gloves. During communion, congregants may remove their masks to receive the elements, but will replace them immediately when finished. Congregants who feel uncomfortable with this practice may elect to forego communion.
8. There will be no passing of the collection plate. A plastic bowl will be available for congregants to drop off their offerings before/after worship service.
9. Passing of the Peace will be done without touching anyone outside of your own family unit. Use of appropriate hand gestures is encouraged instead.
10. Congregational singing will not occur during the service. A soloist will perform the hymns and any special music. They will be wearing a mask, using a microphone and be physically separated from the congregation, e.g., behind a barrier or in an adjoining room.
11. Special arrangements will be provided for baptisms:
 - No more than the allowable number of congregants can be in attendance, all wearing masks
 - Minister will wash/sanitize hands before the sacrament
 - Caregiver holds the child during the entire rite

- Water is added to the font immediately before baptizing, and a small, sanitized ladle is used to pour a small amount of water over the child's head

B. HYGIENE AND CLEANING

1. Hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) will be available at the usher table before congregants go to the seating area, and also in the Colonial Room. Congregants will use sanitizer as they enter and leave the sanctuary.
2. Bathrooms will be well-stocked with hand soap and paper towels for hand-washing. Reminders will be posted to ensure proper hand-washing protocols are followed.
3. A trash can will be placed by the usher's table for disposal of used PPE's and bulletins.
4. For outdoor services, persons who set up folding chairs for the service will wear gloves and sanitize the chairs in place with a wipe or spray before and after service. For indoor services, the designated pew seating areas will be sanitized before and after the service.
5. Access route to the bathrooms in the Colonial Room and bathrooms will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized in advance of each service. High touch surfaces (e.g., light switches, door knobs) will be thoroughly cleaned.
6. Church sextant will have forms to maintain a record of the cleaning of the church and Murchison Hall.

C. COMMUNICATION

1. Signage will be posted conspicuously around the grounds to remind people about mask use, social distancing and hand washing/sanitizing.
2. For outdoor services, if there will be inclement weather on Sunday morning, the service will not be held but will revert to an indoor, live-streamed event. In this case, only the worship leader, music director and IT support person will be in the church in Phase 3, and also congregants in Phase 4, with approval by the Session.
3. Notification of cancellation of outdoor or indoor services will be the responsibility of the Worship Committee. It will be accomplished via an email blast, phone contact and/or message on the church office's answering machine.
4. As a record of weekly attendance, a digital photograph of the congregants will be taken during the worship service. This photo is not for publication anywhere – is only serves to identify who was present at the service. A listing of attendees may also be used.
5. If a person attending a service becomes COVID-19 positive within 14 days of attending the service, they must notify Dr. Knight-Whitehouse at once. Dr. Knight-Whitehouse will then contact local and state health departments.

III. PROCESS

A. SCREENING

1. The minister will periodically assess the well-being of the church employees (music director and office support staff) via a phone call/email and keep a record of the contacts. Employees continue to work from home except for the Sunday morning church service. Prior to the service, the minister will assess the wellness of the worship leader(s), music director, IT support person and usher(s).
2. During the service, trained ushers will be responsible for maintaining the safety protocols and will be stationed at a table at the entrance to the seating areas. They will be wearing a mask and disposable gloves.
3. The usher will assess the health of each attendee by a touchless temperature check and by asking the following questions: (a) Are you feeling well today?; (b) Have you had Covid-19 symptoms, tested positive for Covid-19 or been in close contact with people possibly having Covid-19 in the last 14 days?
 - If the answer is that they're not feeling well or yes to exposure, the person will lovingly be asked to go home.
 - If all is well, the usher will ask the congregant to use a squirt of hand sanitizer, then offer them a single-use bulletin and direct them to the seating area. In addition, if the person needs a mask, one will be provided.
4. Ushers will also note visitors and record their names and contact information.

B. CONTACT TRACING AND DISINFECTION OF CONTAMINATED AREAS

1. Upon learning of a COVID-19 exposure, Dr. Knight-Whitehouse will contact local and state health departments to apprise them of the exposure.
2. Contact tracing of potentially exposed congregants may be accomplished by reviewing attendees using the digital record made on the date in question. A listing of attendees and contact information will be assembled by the Worship Committee.
3. Any areas potentially contaminated will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected using Lysol/Clorox wipes or spray cleaners. Areas include bathrooms, and frequently touched surfaces like door knobs and light switches.
4. If any positive cases occur during indoor worship, the service will be online only for two weeks and the building will be thoroughly disinfected.

IV. OTHER

These guidelines are intended for outdoor and indoor services. Under Phase 4 regulations, churches can hold indoor services for a 33% capacity attendance, which would be about 64 people for the New Hempstead Church building; however, the number may be fewer as we maintain social distancing. Our initial COVID-19 reopening plan dated June 27, 2020 has been reviewed and modified to incorporate indoor worship procedures. Final plans are available to all users of our buildings and grounds.