

# DEPT. OF HEALTH: NEW YORK FORWARD

## COVID-19 REOPENING SAFETY PLAN, v.3

**Note:** This document will be provided electronically to congregants prior to resumption of Summer, 2021 worship services, tentatively scheduled for June 20, 2021. 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](http://www.nhpchurch.org)

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

**DATE:** June 16,2021 (post-Phase 4 of reopening)

### I. MANAGING PEOPLE

#### A. PHYSICAL DISTANCING

1. a. Fully vaccinated people are not required to wear masks or maintain social distance indoors or outdoors; however, if fully vaccinated people feel more comfortable distancing and wearing a mask, they are encouraged to do so.  
b. Unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated people should wear a suitable mask covering the nose and mouth and maintain a distance of 6 feet between each other.
2. For outdoor services, folding chairs will be set up at suitable intervals and congregants will be directed to sit in those chairs. For those in wheelchairs, the person will be directed to a suitable location. There will also be 5-6 seats placed 6 ft. from an existing chair to accommodate unvaccinated people or those who wish to social distance, e.g., guests. No more than 500 people may attend outdoor services.
3. For indoor services, there will be a limited number of seats available that are spaced six feet away from other seats to accommodate those who are unvaccinated or feel more comfortable with social distance. Attendance is limited to the sanctuary building capacity less space designated for social distancing, approximately 150.
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 indoor and outdoor services, congregants will be directed to designated seating by an usher. For guests, ushers will indicate to them that distanced seating is available if the guests so choose.
6. The Colonial Room and bathrooms will be available for use.
7. 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. a. Everyone participating in the service who is fully vaccinated may choose to not wear a mask and is not required to social distance. We will rely on the honor system to assess vaccination status.  
b. Unvaccinated participants, or those who choose to, will wear a mask and maintain a distance of 6 feet from others. Masks are not required if people are separated from others by a distance of 12 ft.  
c. Children under two and those not able to wear masks for medical reasons are exempt.  
d. Masks will be provided to anyone requesting one.
2. Ushers who are fully vaccinated do not need to wear a mask but will wear disposable gloves.
3. Plexiglas/plastic barriers will be installed indoors as necessary and appropriate to limit contact between worship leaders and congregants.
4. Bibles and hymnals will be available for indoor services.
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. Congregants may speak the responses and prayers.
8. At this time, communion elements will be offered as individually wrapped/sealed items that will be distributed by Elders/Deacons who are wearing gloves. During communion, congregants who are wearing masks 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. In the future (e.g., fall of this year), standard communion practices may be restored.
9. At this time, there will be no passing of the collection plate. A collection box or plastic bowl will be available for congregants to drop off their offerings before/after worship service. In the future (e.g., fall of this year), passing of collection plates may be resumed.
10. Passing of the Peace will be done without touching anyone outside of your own family unit. Use of appropriate hand gestures and words of peace or other greetings from where congregants are standing are encouraged instead.
11. At this time, congregational singing will not occur during indoor services, but may be permitted in the future (e.g., fall of this year). A soloist or small groups 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 at a distance of 12 feet. Fully vaccinated singers do not have to be distanced from each other.
12. Congregational singing may be appropriate outdoors, based on risk factors such as percentage of vaccinated people, infection rate in the community, masking, distancing, etc. For example,

fully vaccinated, masked congregants spaced 6 ft. from susceptible individuals while singing would present a moderately low risk of infection for unvaccinated people. In addition, special music with brass instruments is appropriate in an outdoor setting.

13. At this time, an outdoor fellowship gathering may occur following worship. Any food provided will either be pre-packaged or served by a Fellowship Team member. Drinks (e.g., coffee, tea, lemonade) will be dispensed by a Fellowship Team member. Servers will wear gloves, and masks, if not fully vaccinated, during service. Indoor fellowship activities will be initiated as appropriate (e.g., fall of this year).
14. Special arrangements will be provided for baptisms:
  - No more than the allowable number of congregants can be in attendance, all wearing masks for the protection of the child
  - 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

#### **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.
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. Standard cleaning procedures of the facilities will be used.

#### **C. COMMUNICATION**

1. Signage will be posted conspicuously around the grounds to remind people about the importance of hand washing/sanitizing and general rules for reducing disease transmission.
2. For outdoor services, if there will be inclement weather on Sunday morning, the service will revert to an indoor, live-streamed event
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.

### **III. PROCESS**

#### **A. SCREENING**

1. 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.

#### **B. DISINFECTION OF CONTAMINATED AREAS**

1. Upon learning of a COVID-19 exposure, 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.
2. 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 full capacity attendance less space reserved for socially distanced areas, which would be about 150 people for the New Hempstead Church building. Our COVID-19 reopening plan dated September 18, 2020 has been reviewed and modified to incorporate the latest CDC and New York State guidelines (as of June 15, 2021). Final plans are available to all users of our buildings and grounds.