A close up of a sign

Description automatically generated**FOREST HILLS CHURCH**

**COVID-19 RE-OPENING PLAN**

*Timeline: TBD by CONDITIONS*

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for bringing Forest Hills Church back towards our pre-COVID ministry and function. Please note, there is no true “timeline” to this plan as the decisions made by staff and volunteers will be driven by considering recommendations of state, local, and conference authorities. Our decisions will be tempered based on local conditions. This document assumes that no public space can be kept germ-free ultimately *each individual is responsible for their own actions and decisions concerning their health and well-being.*

Forest Hills Church remains primarily focused on our mission – to make disciples. We do that by loving God and others, growing in our faith, and serving as we feel led. Loving others includes taking reasonable precautions to protect them during this season.

**Worship and Church Events**

* Current Worship Plans
  + In-person, In-church worship suspended until May 31st.
    - Drive in and out-door worship services may be offered
    - Seating will be spaced to allow for physical distancing.
    - Date may change based on state, local, and conference recommendations.
  + Online worship continues to be available
* Re-Opening for Church-sponsored activities
  + Upon initial re-opening, the following will not occur or be available until appropriate:
    - Nursery care
    - Food service of any kind, includes coffee shop
    - Offering plates passed – Stationary location and online giving encouraged
    - Greeting time
    - Handing of bulletins (copies will be available at door)
    - Lobby iPads
    - Sign up sheets (online sign up and/or volunteer to facilitate)
  + Logistics
    - Worship and event attendees are encouraged to wear a mask.
      * Forest Hills cannot logistically be expected to provide masks for each worshipper, each week for an undetermined amount of time. Encourage attendees to bring their own, if at all possible.
    - If more than one service or other events, arrange for one-way traffic for both the building and sanctuary.
    - Prop open exterior doors when people are coming into church or leaving after worship to limit touching of door handles.
    - The nursery room will still be available for parents to use as needed but will not be staffed.
      * Signage will be added to alert parents that the room is not staffed and they use at their own risk. Additional information regarding sanitation efforts will also be posted.
      * Toys will be limited and sanitized regularly.
    - Monitoring number of people in sanctuary so not as to exceed allowable amount.
    - No non-essential individuals allowed in the church office (sign posted on doors).
    - FHC will have hand sanitizer available as able, encourage members to bring their own to use if possible.
    - Encourage worshippers to sit with 6 ft. minimum between them and next person.
      * Family units exempted.
      * We will rope off every other pew to stagger seating.
    - Worship leaders encouraged to incorporate brief exit instruction to closing announcements.
      * Exit starting from back pews first, please maintain distance.
    - If worshippers wish to talk after church, they will be encouraged to do so outside of the building, and encourage to continue 6 feet distancing.
    - Praise team and worship leaders will not be required to wear masks while leading worship.
    - Greeting or receiving lines are discouraged at this time.
    - Communion practices to be modified to reduce possible community contamination.
      * No common bread basket at this time.
      * Worship leaders to identify best practices.
        + Possible options include individually packaged elements, handing out elements after sanitizing hands or serving elements spaced out on a tray to reduce extraneous handling.
    - Encourage at-risk individuals to participate from home.

**Staff Concerns**

* Pastoral care visit decisions are made by the pastoral leadership.
* SPR to ensure sick leave policy is clear.
* Staff and volunteers strongly encouraged to stay home if they are not feeling well.

**Sanitation Efforts**

* In additional to standard cleaning, these measures will also be taken on an as-needed basis:
  + We will make every effort to monitor our supply to maintain adequate hygiene and sanitation supplies.
  + Sanitize all public spaces after each use:
    - Small tables
    - Door handles
    - Light switches
  + Additional cleaning in bathrooms:
    - Door handles
    - Light switches
    - Soap restocking
    - Etc.
  + Sanctuary:
    - Remove Bibles, hymnals, and tissue from pews due to inability to sanitize.
      * Encourage members to bring their Bible or use their phone.
      * Hymn sing logistics to be determined by worship leader.
        + May require limited song options.
    - Weekly sanitization of pew pencils and pens.
    - Tops of pews
      * Used to help people stand or steady themselves.
  + Any outside group using the building must disinfect thoroughly after they are done.
    - Ruby’s Pantry process is working well, maintain and adjust as needed.
  + Signage to be added to the bathrooms to encourage proper handwashing.

**Communication Planning**

* + Communicating to congregation all worship options, procedures, and requirements.
    - Encourage members to stay home if they feel unsure or if they are sick.
    - Create a communication plan for staff and families for self-reporting of symptoms and notification of exposures and closures.
      * Due to privacy concerns, the name of the sick person is not required, and should not be requested. If known, the name is not be shared.
  + Outside groups are required to notify the church if any participant tests positive..
    - Due to privacy concerns, the name of the sick person is not required, and should not be requested. If known, the name is not be shared.
  + Report to local health officials if someone tested positive who has been in the building
    - Inform those with exposure to a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms, and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.
      * If known, the name of the sick person is not to be shared.
    - Close off areas used by the sick person and do not use the area until it after cleaning and disinfection; wait 24 hours to clean and disinfect to reduce risk to individuals cleaning. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as possible before cleaning and disinfecting. Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep disinfectant products away from children.
    - Advise sick staff and congregants not to return to the facility until they have met CDC’s criteria to discontinue home isolation.

**Future Considerations**

* + Prior to reopening the nursery, a review of sanitation efforts to be completed, including the implementation of a cleaning checklist.
  + Prior to reopening the coffee shop or other food service, we will update practices based on CDC food handling recommendations at that time.
    - This may include eliminating buffet-style service and limiting coffee supplies to single-serve packets.