

Welcome to the United Church of God, San Francisco Bay Area Sabbath Services

Dear Friend,

Together we have faced a health crisis not seen in 100 years and together we can move forward to again fellowship in person as we assemble before God at Sabbath Services.

We are told that the first great commandment is to love the Lord our God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind. And, the second is like it: Love our neighbor as our self.

We come together because we love God and desire to keep His commandments, but as we come together, we must love our neighbor and be respectful that each of us has different levels of health risk and also different perspectives on the relative risk levels of catching and becoming sick with COVID-19. Some may be young and healthy and not consider the risks to be high, others less young, less healthy and have legitimate concerns about contracting and spreading the virus. Loving our neighbor means respecting each other's individual circumstances. It means esteeming the needs of our brothers and sisters in the church above our own views and interests.

With this mind, we ask that you please respect the following health guidelines while you are at church services;

1. We encourage those who are 65 years or older or those who have underlying health conditions to watch or participate in the church services via Zoom Webcast which will continue to be offered. Key underlying health issues in this case are often defined as chronic lung disease; moderate to severe asthma; chronic heart disease; severe obesity; diabetes; chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis; liver disease; or weakened immune system.
2. Directional routes for entry and exit into venue have been created to maintain physical distancing and lessen the instances of people closely passing each other. Please be respectful of the entry and exit procedures.
3. You will be asked a series of health and travel questions upon arrival, as well as having your temperature taken. We appreciate your cooperation with these procedures. We will continue to ask these questions until the risk of community virus spread subsides.
4. If there were to be an outbreak that impacted us, we would want to be able to notify all in attendance for a particular church service. Therefore, we are now taking attendance and maintaining that list electronically in our Planning Center Church Management Software. We will purge those records after the pandemic has passed.

5. So that we can notify everyone of a possible infection, we will need an email address and a phone number for everyone who attends. In most cases, you have already provided this information to us.
6. While you are with us, we ask that you wear a mask (those over 2 years of age and you maintain a least six feet of social distance during fellowship. Speakers and those giving the special music will also be at least six feet apart and away from you during church.
7. Families with small children are encouraged to bring their children into the venue right before church begins so as to minimize the risk that children do not maintain six feet of social distancing from others.
8. We also ask that you bring your own song book and other materials from home.
9. In regard to the toilet facilities we ask that only one person at a time can be in the restroom, except in cases of the same family needing to be together such as a parent and a child. In this regard, a volunteer has been assigned to the men's and ladies' restrooms to ensure compliance and to wipe down the countertop after each use.
10. During church services we will hum so as to not project droplets which could spread the virus.
11. After church, although we would love to provide food and beverages will need to place a pause on that for the moment. Think of it as providing a little break for kitchen crew to enjoy more fellowship.
12. Also, we encourage families with children to have them play outside the venue and to be closely supervised by a family member to ensure social distancing.

As we begin a "new normal", this list may sound a little overwhelming, but I think we will find that we will adapt.

Thank you for your prayers for protection, support for your neighbor and your dedication to following God's laws and ways that lead to health and safety. We know most of all that we look to God for protection and healing even as we do our part.

With Love
Tim Pebworth
Pastor – San Francisco Bay Area and Petaluma