

Chehalis UMC Stage 2.1 Ministry Plan

PREAMBLE:

The General Rules of The United Methodist Church are: 1. Do no harm; 2. Do good; and 3. Stay in love with God. We are committed to doing no harm by prioritizing the health and safety of our congregation, our neighbors, and our community as we discern how to return to in-person ministry in a way that promotes the greatest good and encourages ongoing discipleship for the transformation of the world.

Transitioning to Stage 2.1 of Chehalis UMC's reopening plan requires the Bishop's permission and District Superintendent's approval; compliance with state, county, and conference guidelines; and the prayerful discernment of the Reimagining Life Together Task Force about the readiness of our leaders and our congregation to begin returning to in-person ministry in a way that is as safe, inclusive, and meaningful as possible. It is important to note that Chehalis UMC's stage of reopening will not always align with Washington +State's or Lewis County's phases of reopening. When guidelines compete, we will always follow the strictest guideline available.

This reopening plan was written and commended to the District Superintendent by the Chehalis UMC Reimagining Life Together Task Force: Rev. Karla Fredericksen, Stan Long, Dianne Stefanini, Kathy Westergard, Valerie Sullivan, Carla Wiseman, Jeff Sherman, Mary Dahlstrom, Dave Campbell, and Monica Ferguson. Questions and comments may be directed to any member of the task force or to ChehalisUMC@rainierconnect.com.

NOTE: This is a living document that may be subject to revision as pandemic conditions evolve, and as we are ready to enter a new stage of re-opening.

THE PLAN

GENERAL SAFETY PROTOCOLS – Unless specifically altered elsewhere in this document.

Face masks and strict physical distancing of at least 6-8 feet (except with one's own household) is always required when the building is in use or officially sanctioned church activities are offered in any other indoor or outdoor location. Participants will be strongly encouraged to supply their own masks however face masks will be supplied at no cost for those lacking one. Masks will always be worn over both nose and mouth. The Pastor or designated monitor will ask/instruct anyone who is not to become compliant, and if noncompliant to leave.

Should a participant gain entry but subsequently become noncompliant with face masks or social distancing they will be asked to leave. Should any person(s) refuse to leave all activities will cease, and all participants will be asked to leave. The activity will be postponed until it can take place safely.

Hand washing or sanitizer will be used consistently by each participant upon entering the church and each time hands are possibly contaminated. We will support the use of disposable gloves as desired by individuals, however they are asked to supply their own gloves, unless in food prep (see Mission and Outreach activities below).

Entering the church building:

Signs will be posted at the entrances about how to stop the spread of COVID-19. The signs will include a list of the symptoms of COVID 19. There will be a sign in sheet in the vestibule of parking lot entry double doors for all to sign, date, and leave a valid phone number. This information will be used should the need arise for contact tracing.

A monitor/greeter/screener for any meeting will ask each person entering if they have experienced any of

symptoms as listed in Appendix C. Individuals entering who are positive for any of the symptoms will be asked to return home. If an individual who has experienced any of the symptoms listed in Appendix C refuses to leave, the activity will be postponed until it can take place safely. Temperature monitoring is available.

Each participant will be asked to use hand sanitizer upon entering and the responsible volunteer and signage will direct them to the nearby dispenser.

Participants will be directed to limit the number of items brought into the church building, therefore limiting the danger of bringing contaminated items into the church. All coat hangers will be removed from the entrance racks. Participants will be asked to keep all personal belongings with them at all times. Signs posted at the entrance will be used as a reminder.

SANITIZING SURFACES PROTOCOL:

The following will be done after each use of the building. Each group will use disinfectant spray supplied, following the clearly labeled manufacturer's instructions. Paper towels will be provided as well as a container for disposal. All areas touched during activities, including all high-touch objects and surfaces, will be sanitized. (Please refer to Appendix A.)

Use of restrooms:

Each restroom will be limited to one person at a time during this phase. Each participant is responsible for wiping down all surfaces using the disinfecting spray provided and for washing hands thoroughly prior to leaving the restroom.

Work parties:

Two to three people will be scheduled regularly to complete tasks necessary to implement the plan. Each work party will be responsible to comply with the general safety protocol noted in the plan while they are in the building (masks, distance, sanitizing).

Movement throughout the building:

All relevant doors will be designated for one-way traffic. Entry to the sanctuary will be through the south choir door, exit will be through the northeast sanctuary doors adjacent to the Fireside Room, thus avoiding passing through the narrow hallway. When other hallways must be shared, participants will be instructed to walk on the right side. Signage will be in place to assist in understanding and compliance. All non-essential furniture and items will be removed from hallways and floors. Eight-foot distancing markers will be placed as visual cues inside of the sanctuary and Boadway Hall at strategic points.

All shared items such as hymnals, bibles, donation envelopes, attendance pads, and pencils will be removed from the hallway, sanctuary and Boadway Hall. All children's items will be removed, including from stage in Boadway. The water fountain will be closed using a tape and sign telling people it is closed for use.

Kitchen use:

No food service will take place in the church building itself. However, there will be two exceptions to this. See Mission and Outreach below. Also staff and volunteers may bring a lunch and prepare beverages in the kitchen and use refrigerator, microwave and small dishwasher, using sanitizing practices after use.

High Risk Populations – Encourage Stay Home, Save Lives Directive. Vulnerable adults and persons with underlying conditions are encouraged to participate from home by offering activities such as recording of a liturgical reading, Scriptures, announcements, or music that can be included with both in-person and online worship. However, respecting the right of adults to choose the level of risk they will accept, no adult may be excluded from church activities due to age or health conditions that may make them vulnerable to the disease. (See Appendix B for the list of persons considered most vulnerable to severe cases of COVID-19 if it is contracted by them.)

Leadership Responsibilities (the Reimagining Team, Pastor, and those designated by task group)

- Pastor and Property and Finance Chairperson will coordinate communication between work parties and monitor completion of tasks prior to inviting participants to worship or other activities.
- Each group to use the building will have a designated person, either a member of or trained by the Reimagining Team who is responsible for compliance by participants and educating them as needed.
- Property and Finance Chairperson will monitor availability of needed supplies such as hand sanitizer and disinfectant.
- Reimagining Team will review and update this document getting the District Superintendent permission to implement changes as necessary.

ACTIVITIES UNDER STAGE 2.1 PLAN

Worship:

During weeks allowed (see next paragraph) and on a first signed up, first come, basis: Up to 25 (twenty-five) individuals may participate in in-person worship during Stage 2.1 – this number includes Pastor, worship leaders, etc. However, the church will continue to offer virtual worship. If there seems to be interest, a second group of 25 may worship later in the same day (with a 2 hour transition time between services), and in a separate location (i.e. first meeting in sanctuary, second 2 hours after the first in Boadway Hall). Every attempt will be to keep each worship to 45 minutes. Those with underlying health concerns or individuals over 65 are cautioned to use good judgement as to their ability to participate. The building will remain locked during in-church activities to prevent overstepping our limit of 25 participants. **Signage at the door** will express our regret and give instructions and time for next gathering. We will establish a “sign-up” for attending a given Sunday and/or specific service.

These worship services on Sunday will ONLY occur IF the standard for COVID-19 cases and low-spread in Lewis County has been met as of the previous Monday, as directed by the Bishop’s office. Green or yellow zones, only, and this must have been the case for at least 3 weeks before starting this phase. (See appendix D for full regulations). Notice by email will be sent to congregants, and others (without email) will be expected to call the church office during office hours, or the Pastor’s cell outside those hours, to find out if there will be in-person worship on that week. They may also sign up for attending a service at that time, if it is to be held.

All participants must follow the general safety expectations including face masks, hygiene, physical distancing and cleaning precautions. **Eight foot spacing will be established using signs, barrier ribbons, etc.** Family units may sit together if they choose. All Bibles, hymnals, and other shared worship resources will be removed. There will be no “high touch” practices such as passing the peace, handshakes, passing offering plates or other activities. Alternative “touch free” options can be offered.

There will be no in-person communion, no live singing, no brass or wind instruments unless recorded, no children’s church and no in-person coffee hour following worship. Children under 12 years will remain with their family units during all church activities. Use the protocol established in Stage 2 if recording parts of the service with vocal or wind instruments.

Pastor and other speakers may at their own discretion choose to remove their face covering while speaking, replacing it at conclusion of each speech. They must be up front and at least 15 feet from other persons when this takes place. (Pastor Karla will continue to record her sermons ahead of time so as to not be in an indoor group of people for up to 15 minutes without a mask.)

Sanitizing surfaces protocol will be followed at end of each service (See appendix A for a list of surfaces.)

ADDITION (March 1): On weeks when the county has not met our 2.1 Standard (Appendix D): the following may meet to view the weekly online worship service together on large screen, following all meeting protocols, and leaving immediately after the worship session is completed.

- up to 9 persons with no at-home access to internet
- plus one person who can run the service on Smart TV/Fire Stick and or laptop with projector,

Mission and Outreach

The Missions and Outreach Committee will have limited use of the kitchen as follows:

- preparing breakfast casseroles to be frozen and used at the Gospel Mission,
- baking the casseroles on the morning they are to be used so they may be transported directly to the mission,
- preparing monthly sack lunches/dinners for community outreach to be consumed off the property.

During these Missions and Outreach activities, there may be up to 7 persons in the kitchen. This number allows for appropriate distancing in the kitchen. This group will follow all the general safety protocols listed at the beginning of this document, sanitizing all surfaces and objects used or touched at the end of the session. In addition, all health department regulations for food preparation and kitchen cleanliness will be followed carefully.

Bible Study:

A Bible Study or Discussion Group may meet in the building under the following conditions:

- meetings are no more than twice monthly, lasting no more than 1.5 hours, and dates coordinated so they are not on the same week as another committee or gathering.
- Boardway Hall must be used to allow for appropriate spacing and ease in cleaning,
- a designated member of the Reimagining Team or person trained by Pastor or Team will be one of the participants, and will be the monitor to see all protocols are followed.
- all general safety and sanitation protocols must be followed as stated at the beginning of this document.

Reimagining Team:

The Reimagining Team will continue meeting at the church building and/or virtually to continuing planning for the next stage and/or revisions to Stage 2.1. General safety protocols and sanitizing protocols will be followed.

Other Committees/meetings:

Church Council, handbell groups, committees, and ministry teams may meet at the church with Pastor's permission and/or virtually. For those at home, every effort will be made to make sure individuals can connect via an internet connection or by phone. Those people having difficulty with internet connection may bring their own laptops or devices to use the church wi-fi for a zoom meeting, while maintaining general safety and sanitation protocols.

If in-person meetings take place for logistics purposes (i.e. it is necessary to complete some vital piece of work at the building), participants must maintain safety protocols, including face masks, hygiene, physical distancing and sanitation protocols.

When in-person *worship* is on a Weekend, the pastor will allow up to ONE other meeting of up to 12 persons that week (mid-week), and in a separate space from where worship was.

Newsletter assembly team:

The newsletter assembly team will meet in Boadway Hall once a month to assemble and prepare for mailing the newsletter. General safety and sanitation protocols must be followed. The person responsible to see that they are followed is Valerie Sullivan, the Office Assistant.

Staff and volunteers:

The Pastor and Treasurer/Office Assistant may continue working from their offices but can work remotely as desired. Each may maintain set office hours, with only one or two persons in their office spaces at one time. If coming to the church office for any purpose these individuals should self-screen for symptoms. When in the building they must follow all general safety and sanitation protocols. They should sanitize their hands upon entering the building, and upon leaving wipe down all shared items and surfaces in the offices, and the restroom. (See Appendix A)

Volunteers must self-screen for symptoms and not go to the building if feeling ill. Even when entering alone volunteers must follow all general safety and sanitation protocols. Masks are required except when sitting at an assigned desk, or designated workspace alone. Volunteers will be trained on cleaning protocols by the Reimagining Team member assigned to that group of volunteers. High-touch objects must be sanitized before leaving the building. (See Appendix A)

Staff and volunteers must sanitize their hands before and after using shared equipment like the copy machine, paper cutter, etc.

The **Financial Secretary** will enter the church at her own discretion. She is not required to wear a mask when in the office alone, however if another person such as the Office Assistant is present, they must each wear a mask and keep appropriate distance. She must follow the general safety guidelines. It is important, especially if cash is handled, to sanitize hands frequently and wipe down the surfaces before leaving. (See Appendix A)

The **chairperson of Property and Finance** frequently makes checks on the building, and occasionally must bring workers to repair and maintain building and heating/utility equipment. It is his responsibility to see that he and other volunteers or contracted workers follow all general safety protocols while in the building.

Pastoral care:

- Pastor may, at her discretion have an occasional meeting with the 7 Care Team members, meeting up to one hour in Boadway Hall, and following all general safety and sanitation protocols.
- Weddings and funerals for up to 25 people, wearing face masks and utilizing proper sanitizing and physical distancing may take place during 2.1
- No baptisms.
- No homebound communion. Virtual communion is still offered first Sunday in the evening, with participants bringing their own bread and wine, and blessing together.
- No hospital or nursing home visitation unless an outdoor location is available where social distancing is possible. All participants will wear masks. Visits may be done by phone or virtually.
- Pastoral visits are conducted over the phone or via video chat. Pastor will refrain from visiting parishioners in their homes except for emergencies (such as an imminent death or very serious illness) and must maintain general safety guidelines. However, she may arrange for a meeting with parishioners at the church, in their yard or other designated outdoor location, with masks, hand sanitizing and distancing.

Appendix A

High-touch Objects/Surfaces

High-touch objects/surfaces include, but are not limited to:

- Building proper:
 - Doorknobs/handles, crash bars, and surfaces on doors used to push open
 - Railings, stairwell railings
 - Light switches
- Bathroom surfaces:
 - sink taps, toilet handles, countertops, etc., rail in handicap restroom
- Office(s):
 - Doorknobs/handles
 - Light switches
 - Shared computer keyboards and mice
 - Phones
 - Copy machine*
 - Shared office supplies/equipment* (paper cutters, three-hole punches, staplers, tape dispensers, etc.)
 - Cabinet handles
 - Countertops and Desks

*Shared office supplies/equipment should be disinfected after use (*Exception: The copy machine. Staff and volunteers are required to sanitize their hands both before and after using the copy machine. The copy machine will be disinfected again at the end of the workday.)

- Sanctuary:
 - Doorknobs/handles and crash bars and surfaces where swinging doors are pushed open
 - Railings
 - Light switches
 - Microphones
 - AV equipment
 - Shared musical instruments (yes, all the piano keys, too)
 - Pulpit
 - Backs of pews

APPENDIX B

Vulnerable Populations

According to [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus), based on what we know now, those at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are:

- Older adults (over 65)
- People of any age with the following:
 - Cancer
 - Chronic kidney disease
 - COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)

- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)
- Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus

These should be encouraged to stay home until Stage 4 but are given the discretion to make their own personal decisions about which activities are safe for them, in every stage.

APPENDIX C COVID-19 Health Screening

Do you have any of the following symptoms that are not caused by another condition?

Fever
Cough
Shortness of breath
Sore throat
Unusual fatigue
Headache
Muscle or body aches
Nausea or vomiting
Diarrhea
Congestion or runny nose not related to seasonal allergies
New loss of sense of taste or smell
Exposure to anyone with a positive Covid-19 test

Within the past 14 days, has a public health or medical professional told you to self-monitor, self-isolate, or self-quarantine because of concerns about COVID-19 infection?

APPENDIX D Determining each week the Church's Eligibility for Phase 2.1

The county level data from www.CovidActNow.org is the one data source the Greater Northwest Area of The United Methodist Church will use to determine if ministry settings may request to move to Phase 2.1. It is also the data source that will be used to determine if a ministry setting is required to move out of Phase 2.1 and back to Phase 2 with smaller gatherings and more restrictions. While there are other data sources, this assures we will all be using the same information.

After DS/DCM approval, decisions about whether a ministry remains in Phase 2.1 or reverts to Phase 2 will be made based on the same data **every Monday morning**. If Monday's reported data causes a church in Phase 2.1 to revert to Phase 2, this change must take effect no later than Saturday morning. In other words, ministries approved for Phase 2.1 will know every Monday whether they may have up to 25 persons for indoor gatherings on Saturday and for the week ahead.