



The long awaited day is almost here, this coming Sunday will be our first Sunday worship back in the sanctuary since March 8, 2020. We have learned so much since then. Not just about COVID-19 but also about ourselves. We have learned that not being able to meet in person does not stop us from serving Christ, serving community, and serving creation. Since that fateful week in March 2020 we have begun new ministries, found new ways of being community using new technologies, and dreamed in ways we never thought possible.

The proverbial “light at the end of the tunnel” is almost here. Vaccination numbers are going up and new cases of COVID are going down. With this new optimism for the end of this pandemic, our reopening team, in alignment with the Pacific Northwest Conference and state/federal guidelines, has begun the process of reopening the physical building that houses the many ministries and people that call Wesley UMC their spiritual home.

We are intentional with our rewording that we are reopening the physical building, because Wesley UMC has not been closed. We have continued our many ministries to each other and the community around us. This reopening of the physical building is the next step as we continue to be God’s people in Yakima.

Over the next six weeks, beginning May 23, we will begin incremental reopening of our church for indoor worship and other indoor activities. Reopening will be accomplished while working within Pacific Northwest Conference, State Health Department, and CDC guidelines. Our goal is to be fully reopened by July 4.

Below is our outline for reopening:

Indoor worship attendance: — target 25% capacity (60 people) the first 3 Sundays  
— target 50% capacity (120 people) the next 3 Sundays  
— no attendance limit beginning July 4

Attendees will be asked to pre-register during this 6 week reopening period. Pre-registration will be discontinued on July 4 and thereafter.

Attendees will continue to conduct a health self-check. Anyone who is not feeling well should stay home.

Masks must be worn for those that are not vaccinated including children. We will trust that individuals will be honest in regards to their vaccination status.

Approximately 6 feet of physical distancing between non-family units will be maintained indoors. Fellowship amongst non-family units will be encouraged to take place outside.

Doors will be kept open and HVAC set for maximum air circulation during this incremental reopening period.

Restrooms will be available for use.

The bus will not be offered until June 6 at the earliest and may be offered on subsequent Sundays depending upon demand. A risk assessment will be conducted and any safety procedures will be put into place prior to resuming bus service.

Nursery care and Children's Church will begin no earlier than June 6. Worship attendees will need to indicate on the pre-registration form if nursery care is needed. Adults helping with these services must be fully vaccinated. Any snacks provided will be prepackaged and the children will take the snack with them at the conclusion of the session.

Children's Church will be held outside in the play area as long as the weather allows. It may be held indoors in the case of inclement weather.

There will be no congregational singing at this time. There may be some solo, small group and/or wind instrument performances. The Director of Music will work within the guidelines of this document, guidance from the Conference, and in consultation with the Pastor and the Reopening Team to accomplish this in a safe manner.

Online worship and other online fellowship opportunities will continue to be offered as an alternative for those who do not wish to attend in-person at this time.

Other activities — Communion will be held again starting in July. Weddings, funerals, memorial services, and baptisms may be held again in the sanctuary beginning May 23. The Pastor and Reopening Team will work within the PNW Conference guidance to accomplish any of these events and sacraments in a safe manner.

Other groups and church sponsored events may commence May 24. The leader of each group or event will apply the guidelines of this document as appropriate to their group/event.

No food or beverage service will be offered during our incremental reopening process.

The church office will reopen with staff present starting June 1.

During the incremental reopening period, procedures and actual practices will be reviewed to ensure we are proceeding in a safe manner and to ensure that any concerns brought forward are addressed. Any applicable updates to PNW Conference, State Health, or CDC guidelines will also be incorporated during this reopening period.