

NICHOLS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Guidelines for In-Person Worship – Sundays, 8:45-9:30AM

Purpose: These reopening guidelines are designed for the safety of those attending worship, our staff, our ministry team, and our community. As we have seen and heard from the medical experts and our leaders, in-person gatherings inside a building still presents increased health risk. Our guidelines are based on our approved reopening procedures, health experts' recommendations as well as guidelines from the State of CT for religious organizations during COVID.

Who Should Attend: Our worship service will continue to be broadcast via Zoom at 10am for the indefinite future. Per CDC and CT state guidelines, 6' social distancing and mask wearing continues to be required for indoor gatherings regardless of your vaccination status. Our worship capacity is approximately 50 people (including the worship team). We recognize that everyone wants to see faces in person. We all want that! Attending worship in person is a scarce commodity and should be given a priority to those who can't worship via Zoom either logistically or spiritually. If you are enjoying Zoom worship, please continue to stay online.

Guidelines & Expectations for Worship:

- There will be two worship services on Sundays. **An in-person only service at 8:45am** and a 10am service via Zoom only. We're limited to only one in person service due to the cleaning requirements that would have to occur between services.
- **Reservations MUST be made** so that we can maintain contact tracing and maximize the seating. The reservation deadline is noon on Thursdays by emailing (nicholsmethodist@snet.net) or calling (203.375.5817) the church office with the names of each person expected to attend. To be sure we remain under our maximum attendees, only those who receive confirmation should attend. To allow our volunteers to worship and be sure we are following CT State guidelines, our entry doors will be locked at 8:55am or when we reach our seating capacity.
- Masks are required as well as 6' social distancing at all times while you are in the building. If you do not have one, a disposable mask will be provided at the front door.
- All entry to the building must be through the MDO doors in the semi-circle where temperature checks will be performed prior to entry. Please remain in the designated worship space while in the building.
- Please be sure that you stay home if you feel sick or have COVID or have been exposed to the virus.
- People who reside in the same household will need to sit together and stay at least 6 feet from anyone who does not live with you.
- As we have arranged a seating chart to maximize the seating capacity, you will be escorted to your seat. We understand that it might not be where you normally sit and appreciate your understanding.
- Please refrain from hugging, shaking hands, or other contact and feel free to waive as you greet those you are worshipping with. Also, please exit the church promptly as you're instructed by the ushers.
- All the information needed to worship will be provided on the worship screen including the pre-recorded hymns and special music. Singing and responsive reading is not permitted in the building during worship.
- As we will not pass an offering plate during the worship service, please feel free to contribute online through our website giving page or drop your offering in the offering plate as you enter the worship space.
- At this time nursery care cannot be provided and there will be no in-person Church School. Tessa Speaks provides an alternative online experience to keep your kids connected and help their faith continue to grow.
- Should we become aware that someone who has attended our worship service is infected with the virus, we will notify those in attendance via email or phone call.
- As these guidelines are designed for the safety of all involved, we are thankful for your cooperation that will allow in-person worship to continue. Should compliance for social distancing, mask-wearing, and other guidelines become a problem, Pastor David will end the worship service and dismiss the gathered congregation.
- These guidelines will remain in place until such time as has been determined they can be modified.