

- Approved at a special meeting of Council on August 31, 2020

Momentary Troubles and Enduring Truths:

The Council of Oakwood Church acknowledges that these months since Covid-19's resurgence have been months of increased stress, anxiety, and fear. We recognize the burden of feeling cut off from the community that is among our greatest supports. We recognize the feelings of isolation and grieve with you the loss of what was once normal and life-giving. This time of distancing has left us all feeling disoriented and disconnected from one another. Even as we say that, we also want to recognize that God has not abandoned us. God has not forgotten us, nor has He fallen off His throne. While the one who thinks he rules the world has been sowing difficulty after difficulty with this illness, the Lord of the heavens and the earth is still on His throne, still working toward that great day of total restoration. God is still with us. He is still bringing about His rule and reign on earth. He is still lavishing grace upon us and filling us with hope. He is still our Loving Father and we are His: His people, His body, His image in this world.

In the midst of a multiplicity of opinions and fueled by the stresses of this season, we recognize that it is easy to become contentious and divided. However, as Christ's body in this world, we are committed to love. We know scripture teaches us that love drives out fear, that love is the antidote to division, and that love humbly seeks grace and mercy even for those we may not agree with. We remain committed to being Christ's body. That body is not dependent on physical nearness, but on the very Spirit of God that makes us one. May the Spirit bind us together so that our differences are no longer the focus as we grow in the knowledge and love of Christ Jesus, walking together further up and further into the Kingdom.

As we strive to Share the Story and Build Up Believers as part of our endeavor to participate in God's ever expanding Kingdom, we have been seeking ways to minister that remain faithful to God while also caring for the most vulnerable, as Jesus taught us to. Our goal in the midst of all the turmoil is to approach our world and one another with the same love with which God first approached us. To that end, we submit this approach to ministry:

Plan for Worship:

- Oakwood will host OUTDOOR worship services at 10am Sundays until the weather necessitates a change.
- Oakwood will record these services and post them online as an alternative to the outdoor service.
- Oakwood will adjust our plans in keeping with the best practices for the health and wellness of all in conjunction with the information provided by the CDC and the governing authorities, to whom God asks us to submit.
- As the weather necessitates we will move the worship service indoors, to that end we will begin implementing protocols outdoors so that we are in practice when it is time to move indoors.

Worship Service Protocols:

1. We request that you please stay home if you have high risk factors or are not feeling well during the week. If you have had a cold, you should be fever and symptom free for 48 hours without medication. A questionnaire will help guide your determination if you should attend service or not. (Please see page 4.)
2. A designated person will take attendance at each service. This is being done in order that we might be able to contact all those in attendance in the event of a positive test being made known to us. Visitors will also be asked to supply name and phone number/ email for this reason.
3. Worshippers are asked to sanitize their hands as they enter the service and/or building with the provided sanitizer.
4. Masks are required as you enter and exit the building and in all common areas. Masks may be removed if you desire once you are seated in the worship area 6 feet away from other worshippers. Oakwood has masks available.
5. Collection plates and communion trays will not be passed.
6. We ask that you adhere to 6 foot spacing between families when outside. Our indoor seating will be arranged with 6 foot spacing as well, when the time comes to move inside.
7. When we worship indoors tables will be available in the gathering area for families with kids.
8. When we worship indoors one-time-use activity bags will be available to kids to keep busy at their family's table or seating pod and they will take the whole bag home with them.
9. Children must stay with their parents or extended family from the time they leave the car until they return to the car to go home. Please help your children distance themselves. In an effort to prevent the spread of sickness, we ask that children do not run around with friends in the church.
10. When we worship indoors we will exit immediately from the sanctuary after worship using all three doors- two in the gathering area and one on the north side of the sanctuary.
11. No coffee or snacks will be served by Oakwood.
12. Everyone must keep out of the pre-school area since it will be sanitized and ready for Monday.
13. When we worship indoors the song books and Bibles will be removed from the chairs. Therefore, people are encouraged to bring their own Bible, pens and notebooks as desired.
14. We encourage each person to download the worship service and songs emailed to you for outdoor worship. We will have a limited number of song sheets while we meet outside.
15. We will be grouping the songs so that they will be sung at the opening and closing of the services only. That way, if anyone is uncomfortable with the possibility of spreading germs during singing, they will be able to arrive 10-15 minutes after the service begins and have the opportunity to depart before the closing songs.
16. The online service will be filmed at the Sunday morning worship service whether it is outdoor worship or indoor worship. We want you to be aware that camera equipment will be present at the service. The online service will be available Sunday PM so that our whole family can worship together.

What if there is a positive test?

Oakwood is committed to the safety of all, while we will maintain confidentiality we will also notify all those who have been in attendance of their potential exposure. We will cooperate with the Ionia County Health Department. Anyone who had been in close contact with the individual (less than 6 feet apart for 15+ minutes) will be asked to self-quarantine for up to 14 days after exposure. If you have a pending lab result from a Covid test, you should remain home until you have received a negative test result. If you have a cold please remain home until you have been symptom free for 48 hours with no medications.

Plan for Ministries:

At this time, we are resuming only in person worship. Other ministries will be added as we progress through our phase-in process. We are grateful for our volunteers and want to ensure the safest possible environments for each person to serve in. As we look forward to re-engaging ministries beyond the worship service we anticipate:

The use of sanitizer/hand washing will be required.

The use of masks and the ability to social distancing will be factored in.

We'll encourage ministries to utilize a small group model.

No food or drink will be distributed at Oakwood.

We will be limiting the use of our building for non-church functions.

Vision for Online Ministry

We are considering various online options including podcasts, kid's ministry, and potential virtual discussion groups. While we recognize that some are tiring of the prevalence of work, school, and church online, we also recognize that online ministries will continue to be a growing part of our world. We are committed to exploring the possibilities not just for the short term need, but a long term ministry.



We're so glad that you have chosen to worship with us at Oakwood this morning. To help keep everyone healthy and safe, please take a minute to answer the following questions. **Out of love for others, we ask that if you answer "yes" to any of the following you will choose to attend worship virtually today.** Thank you.

1. Has anyone in your home had any of the following symptoms newly develop or worsen with no other known cause in the past 14 days?

	YES	NO
Fever or felt feverish (100.4 or higher)	___	___
Cough	___	___
Shortness of breath / difficulty breathing	___	___
Sore throat	___	___
Diarrhea	___	___
Chills	___	___
Muscle aches	___	___
New loss of taste or smell	___	___

2. Has anyone in your home had close contact with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days?

3. Have you traveled internationally in the past 14 days?