

COVID-19 RELAUNCH PLANS

PARAGOULD FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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APRIL 2021 UPDATE¹

FUMC continues to acknowledge the seriousness of this virus. We have experienced significant cases in our community and our congregation. We closely monitor the risks associated with this virus for the sake of one another, especially elderly and/or immunocompromised people.

FUMC continues reopening in-person ministries. Current ministry opportunities include:

- **Sunday Morning:**
 - 8:00am Traditional Service, Sanctuary
 - 9:00am Contemporary Service, Worship Center + Streaming Online
 - 10:00am Sunday School
 - 11:00am Traditional Service, Sanctuary + Streaming Online + 103.7FM
- **Youth and children's** ministries are meeting. Confirmation class including 6th & 7th grades meets Wednesdays, March 31 - May 19. Confirmation Sunday is May 23rd.
- **Sacraments:** Holy Communion is celebrated when possible in-person as part of worship with the elements distributed in a safe way including outdoors using individual sealed juice and wafer servings, social distancing, and facemasks. Baptism is available as families and individuals feel led.
- **Adult** Meetings & Sunday School are meeting as their discretion.
- **Witt House** Food Pantry continues to serve our community members in need. Volunteers are now updating their service platforms as they return to offering food choice to clients. For more details including links to sign up to serve in these rolls, visit fumcparagould.org/witt-house.

On March 30, Governor Asa Hutchinson allowed the statewide mask mandate to expire. The Governor left it to individual businesses and groups to implement their own COVID-19 safety measure while strongly encouraging people to continue to wear masks in public. ARUMC Bishop Gary Mueller then sent a letter and video message to congregations responding to this change. The Arkansas Conference is no longer implementing the safety measure stages, instead allowing each congregation to shape their own safety measures relative to their ministry needs and context. The primary requirement with respect to local churches and denominational leadership is the continued wearing of facemasks indoors. Bishop Mueller says this:

...the battle is not yet over. This is why I want to communicate clearly and unequivocally that you still need to wear masks for all in-person events at United Methodist Churches until the scientific data clearly indicates they no longer are needed. This, along with continued social distancing and sanitation, will keep our people safe and help bring an end to the pandemic.

FUMC Paragould will follow the Bishop's recommendation and require facemasks for indoor ministry gatherings until further notice. Preachers and worship leaders will remove masks while respecting social distancing. Children in kindergarten and up are encouraged to wear masks. FUMC will continue to observe other safety measures including social distancing and regular cleaning of facilities.

¹ Approved by FUMC Trustees April 12, 2021 in consultation with District Superintendent Rev. John Fleming.