

# First Mennonite Church Covid-19 Plan

## Guiding values and goals

In deciding when to resume or continue indoor face-to-face worship services and other gatherings, leadership at First Mennonite Church needs to consider our values and goals as a diverse community, which include:

*Love.* At the core of our beliefs is that love comes from God, and showing love to others is the best expression of gratitude to God. Therefore, this plan will prioritize the welfare of the most vulnerable among us as an expression of that love.

*Inclusion.* As part of loving others, we seek to ensure that as many people as possible will be included in our worship services and in our interactions with each other. As we resume or continue indoor gatherings, we will provide virtual options for people who are at increased risk for severe illness.

## Previous requirements for resuming indoor worship services and other face-to-face interactions

Previous requirements were based on a model adapted from *Resuming Care-Filled Worship and Sacramental Life during a Pandemic*, a guide created by several denominations (see [Resources](#)). The model specified levels associated with different restrictions that allowed for a phased resumption of indoor face-to-face worship services and other uses of the FMC building. Transition between levels was based on Marion County statistics found at Indiana Covid-19 Dashboard and Map (<https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2393.htm>), specifically the **Positive Rate Moving Average** (PRMA) for “All Tests”, found within the “Positivity” panel below the map. Certain conditions had to be met for ascending or descending between levels.

## Current requirements for continuing or resuming indoor worship services and other face-to-face interactions

Given the near complete uptake of available vaccines by adult & youth FMC members and participants (based on a survey performed in mid-April, 2021), and the continued effectiveness of said vaccines against Covid-19 variants, the previous requirements are now suspended. FMC will follow published national, state, and local mandates/ordinances (see [Resources](#)) with respect to conducting worship services and other uses of the church building, such as gatherings of FMC small groups, youth activities, committee meetings, funerals, etc., as well as building use by non-FMC groups. Guidances adopted by local institutions (e.g., Marion County school districts & colleges/universities, health systems, and major businesses) will also be used to inform decision-making. When these sources of information are in conflict, FMC leadership will determine which to follow and communicate decisions to the congregation.

Individuals or groups (internal or external) desiring to use indoor facilities must receive approval from Trustees and clearance from the church office. The process is initiated by submitting [this form](#). Approvals may be suspended or revoked if the aforementioned requirements/ordinances mandate a return to more restrictive practices.

Refer to the [FMC Covid-19 Readiness Guidelines](#) for an explanation of a) what's been done to prepare, and b) individual expectations, for indoor gatherings. This document was jointly developed by Pastors and Trustees, FMC medical professionals, the Worship Commission, the Faith Formation Commission, and the Facilities committee. Note that certain practices contained within the Readiness Guidelines might be more restrictive than required by national, state, and local mandates/ordinances in order to meet the values and goals stated at the beginning of the document - especially given that as of the date of this document revision, vaccines are not available to children under the age of 12 and might not be medically recommended for certain vulnerable populations.

Conditions for lifting restrictions entirely and resuming pre-pandemic church activities will be determined later.

## Resources

Resuming Care-Filled Worship and Sacramental Life during a Pandemic:

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/files/862/Resuming%20Care-filled%20Worship%20and%20Sacramental%20Life.pdf>

National Center for Disease Control info:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>

Indiana Department of Health info: <https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/>

Marion County Department of Health info:

<http://marionhealth.org/coviddashboard/DR4417-COVID-Public-Information-Dashboard.html>

MSDWT (Washington Township Schools) protocols:

<https://www.msdt.k12.in.us/2021/07/covid-19-protocols/>

IPS (Indianapolis Public Schools) protocols:

<https://myips.org/about-us/covid-19-ips-response-plan/>

IUPUI protocols:

<https://www.iu.edu/covid/campus-info/on-each-campus/iupui/index.html>

Butler University info:

<https://www.butler.edu/coronavirus>

Plans from various conferences, denominations, etc.:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zil5q5ssl6faxgR2WBbPDHg\\_4kvp6YOS](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zil5q5ssl6faxgR2WBbPDHg_4kvp6YOS)