

Bellport United Methodist Church

COVID-19 Re-Opening Plan
(Target Reopening on September 6, 2020)



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Rev. Suhee Kim Pastor

New York Annual Conference

Rev. Thomas J. Bickerton, Resident Bishop

Rev. Julia Yeon-Hee Yim, District Superintendent

I. Church Reopening Team

The Sanctuary and church buildings have been closed since Saturday, March 14, 2020. Members and building user groups were informed via email and telephone about the closure. Signs were put on outside doors stating that the Sanctuary and church buildings will remain closed until further notice because of the COVID-19 situation.

Since the closure of the church buildings, the church council and the trustees have been meeting regularly to maintain and manage the church facilities under the NY state guidelines and the NYAC COVID-19 guidelines. The following team was established to plan for the re-opening of our church on September 6, 2020.

Name	Title	Role
Rev. Suhee Kim	Pastor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead worship and provide spiritual guidance. • Lead and plan online worship via Zoom and/or Facebook Live • Purchase equipment for online worship and request technology grant
Michael Bilecki	Chair, Trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee operations and maintenance of church facilities. • Train Ushers and cleaning teams • Provide overall reopening communication guidelines • Install signage, block pews, and mark areas approved for access.
Sheryl Moodt	Member, Trustees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track attendance and coordinate contact tracing with the church office
Bill Morse	Chair, Church Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate activities related to COVID-19 re-opening. • Provide online-technical support and run Zoom worship on Sundays.
Ellen Horn	Chair, Worship Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee preparations to re-open Sanctuary for worship.
Rita Tempel	Weekday Education Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee preparations to re-open Preschool • Install signage and mark areas approved for access. • Create a seating chart with flows
Nancy Thomas & John Hannon	Church Administrative Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure supplies. • Communicate information to members and building user groups.
Maureen Martinez & Mary Scott	Church Sexton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean Sanctuary and other facilities with the cleaning team pursuant to the guideline.

I-a. Cleaning Prior to Re-opening

Hymnals, Bibles, offering envelopes, prayer cards and pencils have been removed from the back of the pews. Closed pews were taped off and cushions on closed pews were removed.

Three hand sanitizer stations – each located at the two entrances to the Sanctuary and the other at the entrance to the office and bathrooms – have been installed.

I-b. Inventory of Supplies

In preparation for re-opening, the following supplies were purchased:

- 500 masks; 150 on order
- 4 hand sanitizer stations; 1 on order
- 5 refills for hand sanitizer stations; 2 on order
- 4 gallons concentrated disinfectant with 1000 wipes and 4 spray bottles
- 2 boxes of latex and vinyl disposable gloves (100 gloves in each box)
- 2 Plastic face shields to be worn over face masks
- 2 Non-Contact Infrared Instant Read thermometers

The above supplies will be replenished as needed on an ongoing basis.

II. Congregational Worship

Members of the church were sent a survey on June 11, 2020 to determine under what circumstances they would return to church. Based on responses received, it is expected that around 35 people (approximately 58 % of the survey responses) will attend in-person worship if the church re-opens in September 2020.

It is expected that the service will be less than 45 minutes in duration. The Sanctuary will open at 9:15 AM and close at around 10:30 AM.

Worship will be abbreviated with no singing and no Passing of the Peace. Communion will be served with individual pre-filled grape juice and wafer packages. There will be no coffee or fellowship hour in the Gathering Area. Bulletins will be placed in the open pews (seats) each Friday before worship on Sunday.

Parishioners will be required to wear a face covering or a mask while inside the Sanctuary. Plexiglass barriers will be installed in front of the pulpit and for the liturgist. The worship leader (pastor or liturgist) will be wearing a plastic face shield in addition to the face mask while preaching and reading from the pulpit and lectern, respectively, if plexiglass is not installed for the pulpit and the lectern.

There will be four Ushers assisting the pastor and the liturgist every Sunday. This worship team of six (6) people will ensure that proper safety and health guidelines are followed as described in

the sections below. As the congregation members arrive at the church facility, our trained Usher team will be responsible for communicating the Guidelines as well as leading the worshippers to sit following social distancing guidelines. Congregation members will be informed of the following guidelines for entering and leaving the Sanctuary at least three (3) weeks prior to opening:

- Two doors leading into the Sanctuary will be kept open. All other doors will be closed.
- All Ushers will be required to wear masks, whether inside or directly outside the church. One of the Ushers will be positioned outside the church by each open door. Standing at a safe distance, the Usher will remind people that if they are feeling sick (or are experiencing any of the symptoms of COVID-19) they must leave. If they are not wearing a mask, the Usher will request that they put on a face covering or wear a mask before entering the Sanctuary. If necessary, the Usher will provide face mask(s) to people who do not have one. All must have a face covering or wear a mask before entering the Sanctuary.
- Congregants will be entering the Sanctuary from either the front door through the Narthex or through the back door of the Sanctuary, which leads from the church parking lots through the Gathering Area. There will be two (2) Ushers at each location to greet the parishioners and to direct the traffic flow into the Sanctuary.
- Those arriving through the front doors of the Sanctuary will be greeted in the Narthex and guided to enter the Sanctuary on the left side only. Congregants will be advised that there is room for families in groups of 2-3 for the pews next to the windows. The middle pews on their right will be for singles or couples. Ushers will fill the pews from the front of the church to the back of the church to maintain social distancing.
- Those arriving through the Gathering Area will be directed to enter the Sanctuary by one Usher. When they get to the Sanctuary, they will be guided by another Usher to take seats in the pews on their left, which will be for families in groups of 2-3 for the pews next to the windows, or in the middle pews on their right for singles or couples. Ushers will fill the pews from the back of the church (closest to the Narthex) to the front of the church to maintain social distancing.
- As the Ushers guide the congregants to their seats, they will communicate the safety guidelines and protocols such as being seated according to social distancing guidelines and wearing masks throughout the worship service.
- In the situation that a congregation member refuses to follow these safety guidelines and protocols, such as not wearing a mask during the service, the Usher will continue to pleasantly explain the justification of the safety measures that have been developed. In the unforeseen situation that the congregation member continues to refuse to obey the protocols, the team will explain to the person/people that the worship service cannot be held unless everyone follows the guidelines, and the pastor will be informed.

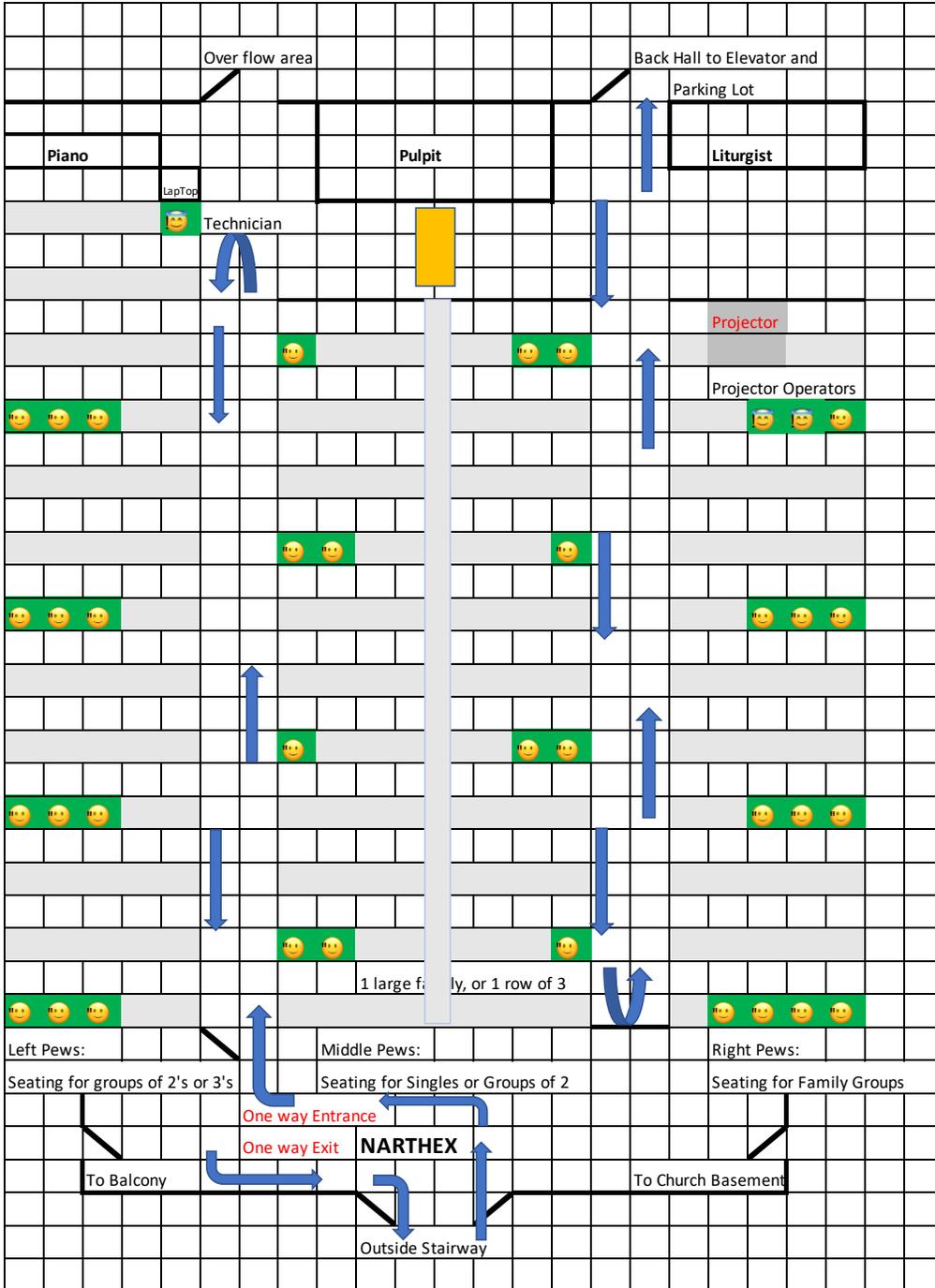
- As congregation members enter the Sanctuary, there will be an Usher on each side of the Sanctuary directing members to sit in the designated pews where paper seat markers have been placed.
- When the service is over, the worshippers will be required to wait until the Ushers direct them to exit through the same door that they entered the Sanctuary. This will allow Ushers to dismiss worshippers row by row, starting with those rows closest to the exit doors, thereby maintaining social distancing and to direct flow to the exits of the church. Congregation members that need the elevator, will be directed by an Usher to the elevator. On exiting the elevator, the member will be directed out one of the 2 doors in the Gathering Area.
- There will be an Usher who will take attendance and record where members of the congregation have been seated.
- **Ventilation:** Air Conditioning will be turned on at 8:30am and be turned off at 9:15am before the arrival of the congregation. After the air conditioning is turned off and when it begins to get uncomfortably warm, we will open windows on both sides of the Sanctuary as well as the front door in order to increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible.

Due to safety concerns during this pandemic, there will be no passing of the offering plate during the worship service. There will be an offering plate located at the entrance of the Sanctuary on both sides, where congregation members can give their offering as they enter or leave. In addition, online internet offering will be available as it has been during the church shut-down period.

The bathroom located in the hallway of the Sanctuary will be used if necessary. Since the worship service will be less than 45 minutes in duration, we will discourage use of the bathroom by making an announcement at the start of worship. If someone must use the bathroom, however, the Ushers will ensure that only one person exits the Sanctuary to use the bathroom at any given time.



Seating Plan



II-a. Managing Capacity

The seating capacity of the Sanctuary according to the Fire code is 200 people. Per the guidelines from the state and NYAC, we will restrict the number of people worshipping in the Sanctuary to **50** (about 25% of full capacity).



Every third pew will be open – i.e., for every pew that is open, two pews immediately in the front and back are blocked off with yellow tape. The blocked pews are clearly marked as shown in the photos on the next page. The open pews will have disposable paper seat coverings over seat cushions. As indicated in the diagram above, there are 12 pews available for seating worshippers.

To implement social distancing guidelines (seating unrelated parties 6 feet apart), members of the same family will be seated together to maximize the seating capacity. Each open pew on the window walls of the church will be able to accommodate family parties of 2-3, or 4 in the case of small children. The middle rows can seat singles and couples. The choir loft can seat a maximum of an additional 7 people (3 couples and 1 single), and the overflow area at the back of the Sanctuary, can also seat a maximum of an additional 7 people (3 couples and a single). As indicated earlier in this section, however, maximum seating in the

Sanctuary will be kept at 25% capacity, which is 50 people.



Signs have been posted inside the church buildings informing people of social distancing guidelines and the need to wear face coverings or masks while inside the Sanctuary. These signs are posted by the main entrances, by the back stairway in the Gathering Area, and at the hallway leading to the back entrance of the Sanctuary.

II-b. Protocol for Handling Non-Compliance

As previously stated in II, if a person refuses to comply with the protocols or procedures described in this document, an announcement will be made by one of the members of the worship team that in-person worship is being cancelled. Should this happen while the service is in progress, the worship leader will give the benediction and end the service immediately. Parishioners seated inside the Sanctuary will be guided by Ushers to leave the building.

Should there be a need, 911-emergency will be called by one of the members of the Worship Team to evacuate the Sanctuary.

The above process of ending the service and closing the Sanctuary will apply in all cases of non-conformance.

II-c. Tracking Attendance

The two Ushers and the Attendance Taker inside the Sanctuary, will be responsible for counting and recording the names and contact details of the people entering the building. If a guest or a person not known to the Usher enters the Sanctuary, they will be approached by the Attendance Taker and requested to provide their name and contact details. If the person refuses, the protocol for handling non-compliance will be implemented.

If the number of attendees reaches the maximum allowed capacity (50) in the Sanctuary, additional worshippers will be directed to the Choir Loft or overflow area (Fred Smith Room). Once these areas are full, further arrivals will be asked to leave. If a person refuses, the protocol for handling non-compliance described “II-b Protocol for Handling Non-Compliance” will be implemented.

The details of people attending in-person services will be recorded by date and maintained in an Excel database. The worship leader will make an announcement at the start of the service stating that if any person in attendance is diagnosed with COVID-19 within the next 2 to 3 weeks, they must inform the church office via email or telephone. County and state guidelines will be followed in deciding how and to whom the attendance information/data will be released and/or shared.

If someone tests positive for Covid-19 testing, we will immediately stop having in person worship. District Superintendent will be notified. Contact tracing information will be provided to New York State as necessary. Confidentiality and privacy will be respected at all times.

II-d. Offertory

- **Mail-In Offerings**

Since the closure of the Sanctuary in mid- March 2020, members have been mailing in their offerings to the church via USPS. We will continue to encourage mail-in offerings.

- **Electronic Giving**
We have established Zelle payment/transfer. Parishioners can donate electronically via their bank accounts by using Zelle payment to send offerings to Bellport United Methodist Church (bellportumc@optimum.net).
- **In-Worship Giving**
An offertory basket and/or plate will be located on the table near each entrance. People can place their offerings in these receptacles as they enter or leave the church. After services, the worship team will transfer the offerings into a clear plastic bag, which will be stored in a secure location for 72 hours before the offering is counted, recorded, and deposited in the bank by the Financial Secretary.

II-e. Cleaning after Worship

After everyone has exited the Sanctuary and the church doors have been closed, one of the Ushers will oversee the cleaning of the Sanctuary by the church sexton(s). The Sexton(s) will wear a mask and gloves and perform the following actions:

1. Walk around areas accessible to worshippers including pews to remove any trash or items that may have been left behind.
2. Clean the floors of the Sanctuary and other accessible areas, including vacuuming carpeted areas, if needed.
3. Wipe down – using a disinfectant – the pews, chairs, and surfaces conducive to high touch including tables, lecterns, altar, windowsills, doorknobs, and communion rails.
4. Bag all wipes, trash, etc. and take the trash immediately to the dumpster.
5. Re-fill hand sanitizer stations, re-stock masks, as required.

The Sanctuary and church buildings will remain closed to other user groups until further notice. No meetings other than Sunday worship is planned at this time.

III. Communication

The New York Annual Conference Covid-19 guideline was sent to all members and worship attenders of Bellport UMC via email in June. The leadership of Bellport UMC had a several meeting to create our reopening plan according to the NYAC guideline during past three months. The procedures described in this document have been approved by the Church Council on August 18th. They will be communicated to our members and building user groups via email/telephone and posted on our web site prior to re-opening.

III-a. Communication with Church Mutual Insurance Company

Mr. Mike Bilecki (Chairperson of the Board of Trustees) contacted Church Mutual and confirmed that the Church Mutual have no restrictions for Bellport UMC's reopening. But they recommends that churches follow CDC and State guidelines. Our reopening plan follows Church Mutual Insurance company's "Recommendations for a Safe Return to Worship" resource

listed below. They also provided more resources at https://coronavirus.churchmutual.com/?_cldee=bWJpbGVja2lAeWFob28uY29t&recipientid=content-2c8e22e29c20e8118122c4346bacdbf8-8971638c57bb4eeca6356508eb5d6abe&utm_source=ClickDimensions&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2020.03.20%20COVID-19%20Website%20Launch&esid=c3f30796-aa6a-ea11-a811-000d3a55df44

Safely Returning to Worship

PROTECTING
THE GREATER
GOOD



Houses of worship play a critical role in the life of the community. As the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic progressed, many houses of worship suspended in-person gatherings in accordance with government mandates or recommendations to limit the spread of the virus.

Now that [states and local communities are planning to ease restrictions](#), houses of worship are considering how and when to resume gathering for services and other activities. Church Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. (a stock insurer)¹ recommends that insureds comply with all state and local laws and ordinances related to COVID-19, take necessary safety precautions to avoid the spread of COVID-19 and follow the CDC guidelines available on our [dedicated website](#).

The following presents a high-level overview of safeguards recommended for houses of worship as they consider re-opening for public services:

Prepare your building

Walk around the property and inside the buildings to check for any safety hazards or concerns. [Clean and disinfect your facility thoroughly](#) before opening. Make sure adequate supplies of hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies and disinfectants are available. Post signs regarding new procedures on social distancing, changes to operations and the importance of handwashing.

Continue with online options

For those who are sick, at higher risk, recently exposed to a COVID-19 patient or who are otherwise uncomfortable gathering in person, continue to offer livestream or other online worship services.

Use protective equipment

All who attend, work or volunteer should wear a face covering or mask per guidance of the CDC. Ushers and greeters who hold or prop open doors should wear gloves. Those who are ill or displaying symptoms should be advised to stay at home. Consider contactless temperature checks.

Maintain social distancing

Arrange worship services to enable six feet of physical separation between persons. This may involve removing or cordoning off seats. Additional smaller and shorter worship services may be required. Provide for an orderly dismissal of the service to enable social distancing. Additional transition time between services may be required.

Postpone practices that involve physical contact

Implement alternatives to shared activities such as distributing bulletins, passing offering baskets, sharing communion elements and passing attendance pads. Consider temporarily discontinuing coffee or refreshment times and shared meals. Think of creative ways to pass the peace or greet each other without touch such as smiling and waving.

Enhance cleaning practices

Once services resume, establish an enhanced cleaning and disinfecting schedule, including cleaning the sanctuary, restrooms and other rooms after each service. Disinfect common and high-traffic areas as well as any items handled by attendees.

Safeguard older adults and those at high risk

Consider instituting a separate, smaller "senior service" for those age 60 and above or those with underlying medical conditions. Limit their volunteer participation to activities that do not involve physical interaction with others.

Protect children, youth and those who work with them

Consider whether to temporarily postpone nursery programs and Sunday School classes. If you plan to continue to offer such services, consider additional safeguards including social distancing with limited class sizes, temperature/symptom screening of children, modified drop-off and pick-up procedures, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting, and protective equipment for staff and volunteers.

Communication is key

Whatever safeguards are chosen, **it is vital to communicate procedures to the congregation, volunteers and staff before the date set for re-opening**. This can be accomplished through email, social media postings, phone calls and/or automated phone messaging, as well as signs and postings at your facility.

HERE TO HELP!

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is changing the way organizations operate.

Church Mutual is here to help. If you have questions about safely returning to worship, contact Risk Control Central.

Call Us: (800) 554-2642 (Option 4) Ext. 5213

Email Us: riskconsulting@churchmutual.com

For more COVID-19 resources, visit coronavirus.churchmutual.com.

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IV. Pastoral Care

Covid-19 has presented challenges to all areas of life, especially the life of the church. We recognize the need for intentional pastoral care and presence when those who are in need often are isolated in quarantine. Bellport UMC and Rev. Suhee Kim have been intentionally working to connect people in all the ways that we can while we are apart. There is a list of people who are shut-in/home-bound that the pastor and the care ministry team regularly makes contacts via phone, email or mail.

We plan to continue these ministries as we reopen. There is a prayer chain so that prayer requests can be immediately shared. When a church member needs spiritual and/or emotional care as well as counseling, the individual can reach out to the pastor at any time. We also have resources and references for when individuals need support beyond prayer such as emotional, mental and social services. We would refer them to the varying agencies and supports available in Suffolk County.

- Suffolk County Crisis Response - DASH (Diagnostic, Assessment, and Stabilization Hub) - 90 Adams Ave., Hauppauge, NY 11788 (631) 952-3333
- Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault 24-hr. Hotline Response Hot Line - (631) 360-3606
- www.responsehotline.org LICADD substance abuse Hotline 24-hr. (631) 979-1700
- Hotline Suicide Prevention Lifeline (631) 800-273-TALK (8255)
- Long Island Crisis Center (516) 679-1111