

Protocols to be followed During a Pandemic

According to the Ministry of Health, Knox is a public building when it is open to the public and is, then, subject to all government and local Health Unit requirements. The safety of everyone in our congregation is an utmost priority: if we close, we will not return to "business as usual" until we are comfortable to worship in person and with the recommended protocols outlined below in place.

1. For each service, a masked Greeter will be at each of the entry points to greet people in a safe manner, to ask people if they have read the screening questions posted on the outside doors, to remind them to sanitize, to check off/have them sign their names with contact information and direct them to their seats. People will be reminded to bring their own masks.
2. When entering or once inside the building, physical distancing must be maintained as per Public Health guidelines.
3. It is recommended that elevator usage be restricted to one person at a time, unless accompanied by your own household or bubble.
4. People will be asked not to hang their coats up in the Narthex but to take them to their pews.
5. When masks have been mandated by Public Health, they must be worn at all times by anyone who is able.
6. Alternate pews will be blocked off and people will sit physically distant from others who are not in their household or bubble.
7. At the end of the service, people sitting in the back pews will exit first maintaining a safe physical distance. People will be asked to fully exit the building. Any socializing may take place outside or at virtual coffee hour.
8. Alternatives to shaking hands and/or hugging such as standing in place and making eye contact, giving a wave or peace sign for passing of the Peace will be invited by the Worship Leader.
9. Hymn books and Bibles will be removed from the pews and the words will be up on the screens. Physical distancing restrictions do not allow for a full choir in the chancel. Congregational singing will be permitted with masks on. Anyone medically exempt from wearing a mask should hum rather than sing.
10. The Worship Leader will remain physically distant in the chancel and will not need to wear a mask. If a different person from the Worship Leader is reading scripture or giving an announcement, they will remove their masks and sanitize their hands before touching the microphone. They will re-sanitize and put on their masks before leaving the chancel. Alternatively, a separate microphone may be used. The lectern and microphones will be sanitized at the end of the service.
11. There will be no coffee times or pot luck suppers until it is absolutely safe to do so and Public Health guidelines will be followed.
12. Offering plates will not be passed but offering may be deposited into a Knox box by the contributor.
13. There will be no Godly Play or nursery program until deemed safe to resume. Children are invited to remain in the pews with their caregiver.

14. Limited use of the bathrooms will be encouraged; however, each bathroom will be posted with a hand washing sign and sanitization protocol.
15. Once the church is deemed ready to welcome the public again and upon approval by Leadership Team, small groups may be able to meet depending on the type of activity and the number of people attending. Local Public Health protocols must be followed which currently include hand sanitizing, physical distancing, the wearing of a mask, the number of attendees, the recording of names and contact information and proof of double vaccination.
16. Concerts will be permitted provided Public Health guidelines for a Concert Venue are met.
17. A Communion service may be held with safe guidelines in place for the administration of the sacraments.
18. A wedding and/or funeral service may be held if it fits into all applicable Public Health guidelines. If in-person services are not being held, a private family baptism, following all applicable Public Health guidelines, may be possible.
19. The Minister, Office Secretary and Custodian will be provided with the necessary PPE, sanitizers and sanitizing cleaners.
20. The Ministry and Personnel Committee will provide the necessary training for the strict disinfecting and cleaning protocol with the Custodian.
21. If it becomes necessary to close the building during a pandemic, the minister, secretary and custodian will return to their offices when they feel they would be comfortable and when M&P deems it to be safe.
22. People entering the building at either of the three entrances during the week must sign in with their name, date and contact information.
23. For a trial period from October 10, 2021 to January 10, 2022, people attending an in-person service at Knox must be double vaccinated. Government-approved proof of vaccination must be shown when signing in before each service. This temporary protocol will be reviewed at the end of this period.
24. In the event that someone is disruptive during a worship service by not complying with current pandemic protocols, the worship leader will suspend in-person worship and will invite people to continue worshipping virtually.
25. The Chair of Leadership Team will send out a series of communications to the congregation to inform them of the protocols to be followed before the first in-person service takes place.

N.B. The above information was written for COVID-19 and was relevant October 2021. Public Health guidelines are constantly changing as knowledge evolves. Guidelines must be checked on a regular basis to ensure all policy and procedures meet current standards.