

## **Guidelines for in-person worship at Rye Presbyterian Church Updated April 2021**

**I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord!”**

*Psalm 122:1*

In June of 2020, a reopening task force was established by the Session to deliberate carefully regarding the most prudent course going forward for our church. It studied recommendations and guidelines from the NYS Department of Health, the CDC, and Presbytery. The guiding principle of the task force has been to ensure the health and safety of our congregants and of our leadership.

Our live-stream services are going well with the permanent upgraded audio/visual system now fully installed, yet there is increased comfort that many are vaccinated, and attendance at church is slowly rising. While we feel that being cautious remains prudent, with ongoing diligent care to follow cleaning and other protocols, in-person worship should be minimally risky to many people.

### **The following are procedures for in-person worship in the RPC sanctuary:**

1. Worship attendance remains limited to allow for safe distancing for all present. For our sanctuary, that is about 150 people, depending on household size.
2. We will continue using our reservation system for worship. The link is sent out via email and is available on the Worship page of the church website. Registering ahead of time to attend worship each week reserves a space for you, allows us to plan appropriately, and makes entry into the sanctuary much easier. You will be asked your family name, and how many from your family will be attending. If the service registration fills to capacity, your name will be placed on a waiting list, with notifications sent out if a space opens up.
3. We request that you attend only if you are healthy, are showing no signs or symptoms of illness, and have not had any known exposure to COVID-19 in the preceding two weeks. If you have any symptoms, *please stay home*. You can still attend worship via YouTube or Zoom.
4. Since it takes more time than usual to get everyone in place, arriving a little early is a good idea.
5. Everyone except children two and under must wear a mask at all times during the service. You are encouraged to bring your own, though we will have a limited supply of adult-sized masks if you should forget yours.
6. You will be asked to use hand sanitizer before entering the sanctuary.
7. For entry into the church everyone will use the main sanctuary doors facing the Post Road. Ushers will be there to greet you, confirm your good health, and help you find a seat safely distanced from other congregants, filling the available pews from front to back if space is tight.
8. At this time there is no child care or Sunday School, but children are welcome to sit with their families during worship. Children over two years of age are required to wear masks. We will provide coloring pages and illustrated children’s bulletins that will be connected to each Sunday’s readings.
9. Even as we move toward “normal,” worship will look and sound different.
  - Upon entering the sanctuary, you will be asked to check in and then helped to find a place to sit. Families of five or less will be able to sit together.
  - Pews will be marked off to maintain social distancing. Please do not sit in pews with the cushions turned up.
  - To increase air circulation, while the heat/AC will be running, we will also have windows open. Please feel free to dress comfortably.

- There will be no congregational singing of the hymns. Hymns will still be included in the service and will be sung by the soloists.
  - Please refrain from physical contact such as handshakes or hugs, with those outside family groups.
  - The offering plate will not be passed. Offerings may be put in the offering plates at the exits.
10. Following worship, you will be asked to leave the sanctuary keeping six feet apart from others.
- To minimize crossing over, please allow those nearest the doors to exit first.
  - There is no Coffee Hour at this time.
11. We ask that you do not go to any other part of the building. Please use the restrooms only if absolutely necessary.

Thank you for taking the time to read this. It is a lot to think about and keep in mind as we gather, but by taking these precautions we trust that we will be both glad and safe as we return to our “house of the Lord.”