



NEW HARBOR
COMMUNITY CHURCH

REOPENING PLAN

PLANS FOR A GRADUAL RETURN TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP

SUMMARY

We seek to worship together as a community of believers. As part of post-COVID reopening, we also acknowledge that many in our congregation should not or will not want to worship in person. To support as much of our congregation as possible, we will offer both virtual and modified in-person worship. Some of these modifications will need to continue for several months, if not indefinitely.

This document contains specific plans to safely resume in-person Sunday worship in a way that protects and maintains trust of our congregation and community.

SCOPE

This document addresses initial resumption of Sunday worship service, including the Children's Ministry. Sunday Youth, small groups or other events at New Harbor Church are out of scope and not addressed.

This plan takes into account official CA guidance and County Health Social Protocols (see [Resources](#)) as of May 26, and will be adjusted as health guidance is loosened or tightened.

Although out of scope for this document, it is recommended that we also prepare in advance our response to someone in our church getting sick.

OUR TENETS

(UNLESS YOU KNOW OF BETTER ONES)

- Provide a safe means of weekly Sunday worship for our congregation wherever they feel most comfortable.
- Protect the health of our staff, volunteers, and their families.
- Continue to be a valued part of the Benicia/Vallejo community by respecting the laws and guidance of local, state and federal authorities when they are intended for the public good.

ATTENDANCE

Limits

California State guidance ([May 25](#)) limits attendance to the lesser of 100 people or 25% of the building occupancy for 21 days after the county allows religious openings.

That limits us to having a maximum of 55 people in the church building at any time.

Prior to COVID, we averaged approximately 127 attendees between both services, including all staff, volunteers, and children. Around 15 people are serving in both services, leaving around 112 unique attendees each Sunday. According to [The Malphurs Group study](#), we should expect 30% to return initially, but plan for as much as 60%. Therefore, **we should expect 34-67 total attendees initially.**

Tracking

In order to comply with this guidance, we need to proactively maintain a count of all people in the building during the service.

To avoid turning people away, we should consider setting up registration or RSVP through CCB for each service, and provide flyers that HUGs can hand people if the service is full.

Although not mandated, we should track where congregants sit in order to facilitate contact tracing should someone become sick. This can be done by taking a couple of pictures of the Sanctuary during service.

FACILITIES PREPARATION

We seek to minimize the surface areas that need to be cleaned each week. All non-essential materials will be put away such as Bibles, pens, and prayer cards. Children's classrooms will be initially closed, but should also be streamlined for the time when they are reopened.

Both bathroom sinks will get touchless faucets installed. Health and traffic signs will be printed or purchased and placed at the entrance and either end of the downstairs hallway.

The lobby will be blocked with tables so that traffic flow moves through the hallway, and people do not gather to commune in the lobby.

We have completed an initial cleaning, wiping down surfaces. Because the church has been vacant for weeks, we do not believe a substantial deep cleaning or carpet cleaning will accomplish anything meaningful.

FACILITIES CLEANING

After each service the following areas will be cleaned:

- Door handles
- Microphones
- Soundroom
- Bathrooms
- Lobby desk/shelf
- Sanctuary podium
- Sanctuary tables and chairs
- Sanctuary donation box
- Light switches
- iPads (if used)
- ~~Nursery and classrooms that were used~~

SANCTUARY SEATING

There are multiple ways to configure the Sanctuary to promote social distancing. We should try to achieve the following objectives:

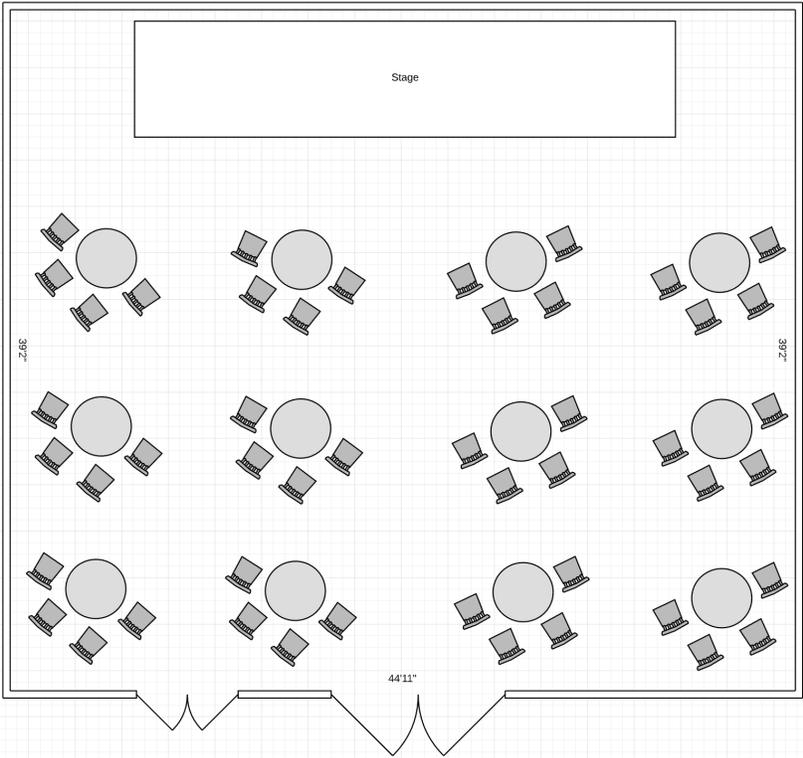
- Provide an attractive and welcoming environment
- Keep family units together
- Maintain recommended social distance of 6'
- Not put anyone in an uncomfortable or unhealthy position
- Provide extra distance between seats and the music team and pastor/speaker

The following are some optional configurations. The first option is more flexible to move seats between tables as necessary.

Configuration 1: Coffee-house

One configuration we should consider is the coffee-house setup with different numbers of chairs around individual tables. Tables and chairs should be at least 6' apart. This configuration allows families of different sizes to sit together, and seats

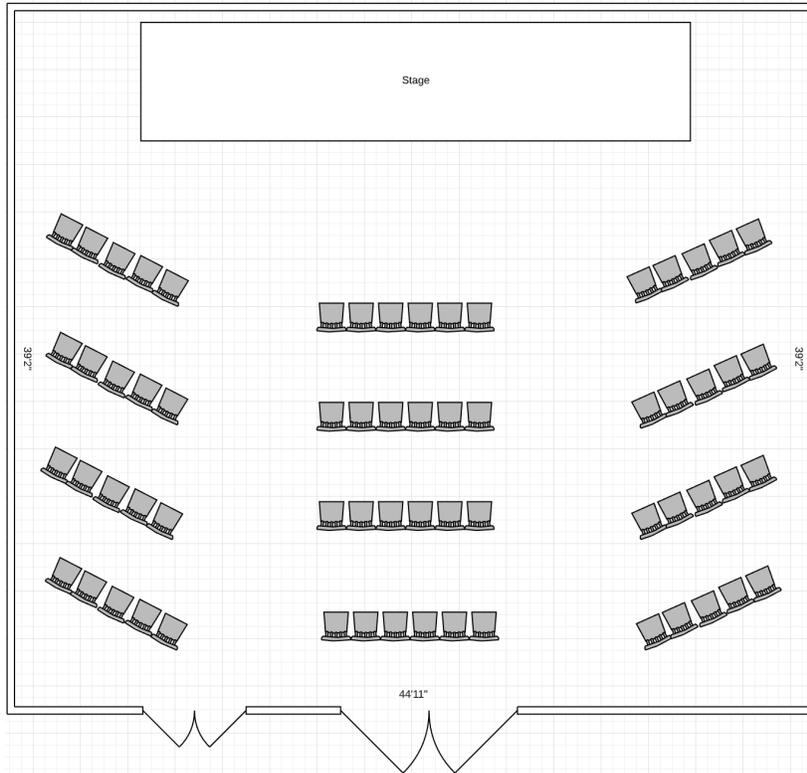
approximately X total attendees.



Not to scale

Configuration 2: Spaced out rows

Another configuration we should consider is a modified setup of our standard arrangement, removing every other row to ensure 6' between rows. This configuration supports approximately Y total attendees.



Not to scale

TRAFFIC FLOW

The most challenging areas for social distancing are the entrance and downstairs hallway. In order to manage traffic control as well as proper counting of attendees, we should direct all traffic through the front entrance.

Front Door

To restrict gathering at the entrance or hallways, posted signs will ask that people gather near the front door where a HUGs greeter can usher them to their pre-assigned seats in the Sanctuary.

Traffic Direction

Before service, the flow of traffic should be through the hallway to the Sanctuary. After service, the flow of traffic should be reversed, from the Sanctuary out to the front entrance. Those that need to move in the opposite direction need to use the upstairs. Signs will be posted at each end of the hallway specifying how traffic should flow, and HUGs members posted at each end of the hallway to help reinforce flow and distancing.

HUGs should encourage conversations and group gatherings to take place outside in the front parking lot or in the Sanctuary.

If someone needs to exit the Sanctuary to the restrooms, the HUGs volunteer may determine whether they can go there directly (e.g. during service) or need to travel upstairs and back down in the normal traffic flow (e.g. prior to service).

Back Door

The back door should remain locked from the outside but open for existing for fire purposes. A sign will be placed on the door directing people to use the front entrance, and we should communicate this out in advance by email.

Community Cafe

The Community Cafe will be closed to encourage continuous traffic flow and discourage gatherings. Coffee service will be suspended. Similarly, the hallway drinking fountain will be shut off.

Classrooms, Nursery & Family Lounge

Initially the classrooms, nursery and Family Lounge will not be in use and therefore will be closed and locked.

Kitchen

The kitchen will be closed (except by special request) to prevent the need to clean additional surfaces. Signs will be posted on the back doors of the Sanctuary noting that those doors are closed and to be used for emergency exit only.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Children's Ministry (CM) in classrooms is suspended for now. California guidance is that "Children should remain in the care of those in their household unit and not interact with children of other parties at any time while visiting facilities. Close play areas and discontinue activities and services for children where physical distancing of at least six feet cannot be maintained." In addition to virtual ministry, the CM team is looking at handing out bags to kids that come to the service, or that drive up with their families.

COMMUNION

Our normally scheduled monthly Communion would occur on June 7 and July 5. Ed von Emster has developed safe procedures for administering this. To keep things simple, we plan to defer Communion until July most likely.

VIRTUAL SERVICE SIMULCAST

We seek to include our virtual attendees into the service as much as possible. We are investing time and money into improving our ability to simulcast the service in a way that serves both in person and online worshippers. Initially, we will start with a in person Watch Party that views the same prerecorded service as we've been doing, and then we will move to a hybrid approach where the prerecorded music is simulcast to the Sanctuary and online, but then the sermon is conducted and streamed live. When the time is right, we will move to fully live service while still streaming it live online.

COMMUNICATION

Email

Prior to reopening, the following communication will be sent to the congregation:

- Email survey to solicit intentions and preferences
- Email summary announcing our plans for virtual and in-person service. The email should include the following information:
 - Modified welcome back
 - Start time and duration
 - Simulcast options and experience
 - Cleaning & other preparations
 - Modifications: seating, children's, closed areas, traffic flow

Powerpoint

In lieu of a bulletin, all announcements will be in the slide deck and emailed out to the congregation afterwards. We should also have amusing slides encouraging greeting without hugs or handshakes.