



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

VIRGINIA CONFERENCE

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Modest Changes to In-Person Worship Protocols

Dear Virginia Annual Conference:

Below are several modest changes for in-person worship that will go into effect on Sunday, August 9.

These have been developed by the Conference work group, which is continuing its diligent service while carefully monitoring COVID-19 developments in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Please review the updated Technical Assistance Manual (TAM) for more information on the changes. The TAM is on our Conference webpage at: www.vaumc.org/return.

The changes are:

- Outdoor worship can now be performed for a maximum of 250 people;
- New provisions pertain to food preparation for off-site consumption;
- Communion elements may be partaken in an outdoor setting if a plan is submitted to the District Superintendent and approved;
- Clarification on face coverings for children under age 2;
- Clarification on health acknowledgement requirements for in-person gatherings; and
- Allowing face coverings for worship leaders and pastors that have a clear shield to enable lip reading.

I appreciate the continued diligence that clergy and healthy church teams are taking to facilitate in-person worship as well as the ongoing and important work to provide online and telephonic worship services. I also appreciate the faithful ministries ongoing in churches that have determined to wait before returning to in-person worship. Let us pray for one another and pray for our church as we continue our mission to make disciples for Jesus Christ.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Peace and Blessings,
Bishop Sharma D. Lewis