

Grace and Peace from Pastor Sandra:

Kirkwood is happy to share that July 12 is the date for our first combined in-person and online worship service (phase one). To care for all people with the love of Christ, we have put a plan into place as described below. Adjustments can be made based on our experience and any changes in information or relevant guidelines.

We reached this plan after reviewing CDC guidelines, input from two congregational surveys, and the recommendations of a special committee appointed by the session. We have tried to be responsive to the diversity in the input we have received. We encourage older adults and people of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions to make the decisions that will keep them safe, such as staying at home and participating by electronic means, as it is not possible for us to create a risk-free environment. Remember to always stay home if you have any symptoms or have been in recent contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

- Our church janitor will do a thorough cleaning of the church after any other activities and before Sunday services.
- Just before our worship service, volunteers will do a wipe-down cleaning with a disinfecting solution, including all surfaces that could be touched in the sanctuary, narthex, and bathroom. This process will be repeated after our service.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in several convenient locations in addition to hand washing (at least 20 seconds) and “no touch” trash cans.
- Trained ushers and greeters will welcome everyone with a warm word and guide them to their seats. We will refrain from hugging, shaking hands, or lingering in the narthex, maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from one another. As your pastor, I will also observe this distance and request that it be observed with me. A worship leader will guide “passing the peace” by means other than touching.
- We will practice safe social distancing. Our pews are easily moved and will be set to ensure a 6-foot distancing, as will any additional chairs that are set up. Family groups that do not socially distance from one another are free to sit together.
- I plan to wear a mask (face covering) except while preaching or leading prayers. We strongly encourage wearing masks and will follow government guidelines including the Jacksonville Executive Order [[click here to view](#)] which calls for wearing a mask when social distancing is not possible. We will have masks available for those who do not bring one (you may provide a donation to our Presbyterian Women if you like for hand sewn masks). Parents will determine whether their child six or under should wear a mask.

- Our order of service and bulletins will be provided on the screen and via email/webpage. Hymnals and Bibles will be removed from the pews at this time. Contact the pastor for ideas for Bible apps for your phone! Our shared “friendship pads” and written prayer requests will be done via another means we are working out now.
- In the first phase of our gathering in person, our music will be offered to God in a way that does not include congregational singing.
- The Lord’s Supper will be shared in a way that is safe for all and includes those who still need to worship from home.
- Offering plates will be at stations in the narthex, or you may give an offering by electronic giving or “bill pay” through your financial institution.
- There will not be a nursery or children’s church during phase one of our re-gathering in person. The pastor or worship leader will offer the children’s message to children sitting in the pews and online.
- We will mark some areas as not available for use during the Sunday morning worship time. This is so that we can keep those areas clean for use by our preschool summer program and avoid unnecessary maintenance fees.
- After service is over, we will have an announcement for everyone to remain seated until an usher escorts them (just like during the Lord’s Supper). We will escort everyone outside the front doors trying to maintain our distancing.
- We understand that persons with underlying medical conditions and those who are 65 years or older, and persons living in households with more vulnerable individuals are more at-risk. Anyone who should stay home is invited to participate in our online worship through computer or telephone, which will provide equal access for full participation, including prayer requests and worship leadership. This is also a great alternative if you are out of town or want to listen to the service while at work!
- If anyone is experiencing any symptoms of illness (fever, sore throat, achy, sneezing, cough, etc.) or has come into contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19, it is your responsibility to remain home. This includes the pastor, worship leaders and volunteer ushers, greeters, etc.

We are striving for authenticity in our worship and love to all people and not perfection! During this time our services will not be the same as before, but we expect to stay in good humor and open to God’s grace in new ways. We are ready to receive new members, baptize children and adults, and nurture the community of faith. We are also looking at when and how to begin Sunday morning Bible study in a future phase of our re-gathering.

In Christ’s love,  
Pastor Sandra