



Westminster

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

**Westminster Reopens for
Hybrid Worship
Sunday, August 22 at 10:00 a.m.**

Dear Westminster Family,

It is with joy and delight that we are ready to announce that we will welcome worshipers back into the sanctuary space on August 22 at our usual time of 10:00 a.m. It has been a long season of separation, and while we have done our best to remain connected in creative ways, many of us long to be back in our holy space to worship together.

This means that YES! The new A/V system has been installed!! We are so thankful for everyone who contributed toward the system, especially for the sizable gift from the Roosa Foundation that made it possible for us to move forward with this project! A small team of volunteers, led by our Worship Elder Ken Garrison, has been learning how to use the new system and practicing diligently. We could definitely use more A/V volunteers, so if you are interested in learning the new system (it's not that hard, I

promise!) please contact Ken Garrison at euph115@gmail.com.

For those who are eager to return to worship in person the Way Forward Team and our leaders have decided on the following precautions:

All in-person worshipers will be asked to wear masks in the sanctuary space.

The Way Forward Team and the Session feel that it is appropriate to return to a mask mandate for worship. We have concerns about the increase in virus transmission and the new variants appearing in the US. There are also some among us who continue to have compromised immune systems.

Not only that, Westminster deeply values our intergenerational community and are aware that children under the age of 12 are still not yet vaccinated. Not only that, but those youngest children in our community are unable to wear masks properly and would be at even more risk should they want to come to in-person worship. Our commitment to welcome, inclusivity, and safety for all people in our community compels us to take necessary precautions to keep everyone safe.

For those who come to worship in person, by entering our sanctuary on Sunday morning you certify that:

(a) you do not currently have COVID-19; (b) you are not experiencing COVID symptoms; (c) you have no reason to quarantine; and (d) you will wear a mask and practice social distancing if you are not vaccinated against COVID-19

We will continue to offer Zoom worship on Sunday mornings for those who are unable to worship-in person.

Online worshipers will join worship just as they have been for the last several months, through a link that will be sent out on Saturday of each week. That Zoom link will connect online worshipers with those who are worshipping in-person in the sanctuary. We are still learning about this new technology and there will be bumps and challenges along

the way, we simply ask for grace and a spirit of curiosity and joy as we move forward into this new "era" of worshiping as one community.

Fellowship Hour will be held outside on the patio as long as weather permits.

We understand the importance of connection and community now more than ever. As a church, we want to provide ample time for folks to share stories and build relationships. Fellowship Hour is one of the important times we do this. Science around virus transmission has shown that open-air fellowship, especially when eating and drinking, is the safest choice for us at this time, therefore we will host coffee hour outside for the time being.

We don't yet know how we will serve communion, but we know it will be different!

Our next communion Sunday will be September 5. The Worship Team is working on a plan that will allow us to safely receive communion and will communicate that plan as we get closer to September.

As of August 22, we will no longer be worshiping every Sunday with First Presbyterian Church of Hartford, however we continue to explore ways for our church communities to deepen our relationship and ministry together.

One blessing that has come from these last 18 months is our deepening relationship with First Presbyterian Church of Hartford and we will continue to nurture and care for that blessing. Not only are we currently planning a joint mission trip to Puerto Rico in 2022, and working to join our youth ministries, we are planning to join our congregations in worship on Fifth Sundays in October, January, and May, as well as for some of our non-Sunday worship experiences throughout the year.

We understand there may be questions or concerns about our plan for the way forward. We invite and encourage you to direct those concerns to:

For pastoral concerns about returning to worship, contact Nicole Aronson, Care Elder at nmachampagne@yahoo.com.

For information about getting vaccinated and to understand the reasons for our mask mandate, contact Tom Buckley, Serve Elder, at tbtrailrun@hotmail.com.

For questions about worship organization and implementation, and to find out how you can help, contact Worship Elders Ken Garrison at euph115@gmail.com and Callie Boone at callieboone93@gmail.com.

We are so excited to be coming back together in person for worship. Many of us miss being in our sanctuary, connecting with one another, sharing music and sacred time together. We also know that much has happened in the last 18 months, and much has changed. As we move into the future together, we will do so gratefully, generously, carefully, trusting God's Spirit will guide us and walk with us as always.

In gratitude and in faith,

Julie

www.westpresby.org