

COVID-19

Poplar Ridge Christian Church

Re:Group
Phase 2



A Plan For Coming Back Together At Poplar Ridge Christian Church

The following plan was developed and approved by the Covid-19 Strategic Team and the elders of Poplar Ridge Christian Church, in consultation with CDC, state/local, and federal reopening guidelines for faith communities. This plan is subject to change based on recommendations from the aforementioned sources. In its current form, this represents our best effort to resume physical gatherings while also prioritizing the health and safety of the congregation and the wider community. Although we believe this plan is appropriately cautious, we also understand that many will not yet feel ready to resume gathering in-person, even in a limited format. For that reason, Poplar Ridge will continue offering an online worship experience.

*If you are [at high risk of serious complications from Covid-19](#)—or are simply unsure if this is the right time for you or your family to gather in person for worship—we recommend that you make use of our online tools, worship experience, or consider attending the **8:30 am worship gathering (see page 3)**.

This plan goes into effect Sunday, July 19, 2020.
Updated registrations will open Monday, July 13, 2020.

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The Month of July

During the month of July, Poplar Ridge will be hosting on-campus worship services. In addition, we also encourage our adult small groups, youth ministry small groups, and adult Sunday Schools to begin physically meeting again (observing social distancing guidelines). Further descriptions for these items (as well as other ministry areas) are detailed below.

Worship Services: In addition to our online worship experience, we will offer on campus worship services with an altered format, stringent cleaning/screening guidelines (**see page 6**), and an assigned seating format.

As already noted in the section above, we will also continue to offer an online service.

- We will be offering 3 on campus worship gatherings (**8:30 am, 10:00 am, 11:30 am**).
- After receiving feedback from some church members, we will design the 8:30 am worship gathering for those who are most susceptible to Covid-19. This will require capping the 8:30am service at **50**, require wearing a mask, limit the amount of singing, and follow the other stringent cleaning/screening guidelines listed in this document.
- The 10:00 am worship gathering will be capped at **100¹** while the 11:30 am service will be capped at 50. These worship gatherings will also follow the other stringent cleaning/screening guidelines listed in this document (**see page 6**).
- All attendees must **RSVP** to attend any of our 3 on campus worship gatherings using an online platform.
- While it feels strange to RSVP for a worship service, this is the best option we can imagine for ensuring appropriately sized groups, which will reduce the risk of transmission during our gatherings.

RSVPs for upcoming services are available online at the following link:

<https://poplarridgechurch.churchcenter.com/people/forms/138663>

- An RSVP form will be posted every Monday for the following Sunday.
- A link to the form will be available on the front page of our church website, on our social media platforms, and in our weekly newsletter emails.
- If you cannot RSVP online or need help registering, call the church office.
- These RSVP links will remain open until the respective services are full.
- If all services fill up **and we perceive a demand, we will add more** (Please see the section entitled **Our Plan For Adding A Fourth Worship Service** on page 5).
- Cleaning/screening guidelines (**see page 6**) will be in effect during this time.
- To ensure that others who wish to attend have the opportunity to do so, please only register if you plan to attend.
- If plans change, please contact the church office so that we can make that spot available for others.

Worship Service Schedule-The Month of July

Day:	Time:	Other Notes:
Wednesday	7:00 pm	
Sunday Worship Service	8:30 am	<i>There will be limited entrance ways into our worship building. This service will be capped at 50. *See information above.</i>
Sunday Worship Service	10:00 am	<i>There will be limited entrance ways into our worship building. This service will be capped at 100. *See information above.</i>
Sunday Worship Service	11:30 am	<i>There will be limited entrance ways into our worship building. This service will be capped at 50. *See information above.</i>
Sunday	7:00 pm	

¹ Given the size of our sanctuary, increasing the attendance cap of the 10:00 am service to 100 people still meets the recommended social distancing practices from state and local authorities at this time. In addition, it helps to address the current demand of this popular worship service time.

Children's Ministry (Birth-5th Grade): All regular programming (nursery-5th grade) will remain **virtual** for the month of July.

- Our Covid-19 Strategic team has devoted specific time and energy to exploring how to minister to children and families.
- First, we want to say how deeply we love our children and parents. It is because of this that we believe it is in their best interest to continue to explore virtual avenues for ministering to children as our youngest members have the greatest difficulty observing social distancing protocols.
- We know that in order for in-person gatherings for our children's ministry to resume on Sunday mornings we will need to be able to attain enough volunteers to create small, age appropriate groups that will allow adequate social distancing within our spaces.
- This being said, our children's ministry will be offering "Family Fun Nights" on Wednesday nights beginning July 8th at 6:00 pm. These gatherings will occur outside to ensure appropriate social distancing protocol for our little ones. For more details, please visit our children's ministry page on our website: <https://www.poplarridgechurch.com/childrensministry>
- Please note, we are asking that families RSVP to the "Family Fun Nights" if they plan on attending.

Youth Ministry (6th-12th Grade):

- **Wednesday Nights**, 7:00pm: ***High School*** small groups will be meeting.
- **Sunday Nights**, 7:00 pm: ***Middle School*** small groups will be meeting.
- Youth ministry small groups that meet are strongly encouraged to maintain social distance and implement sanitation practices.

Adult Small Groups: Off-campus groups may meet during this time.

- Sign up for a Small Group here: <https://www.poplarridgechurch.com/smallgroups>
- Groups that choose to meet are strongly encouraged to maintain social distance and implement sanitation practices.

Adult Sunday School Classes:

Since hearing the statement from our governor on Monday, June 29th which extends the "State of Emergency" for TN until August 29th (see this link for more details:

<https://www.tn.gov/governor/news/2020/6/29/gov--lee-extends-state-of-emergency-to-aug--29--2020.html>), we believe it prudent to approach the task of restarting our Adult Sunday School classes carefully and thoughtfully. Our Sunday school program is a strength of our church, but this strength also presents some challenges at this time in regards to recommended social distancing practices.

After careful consideration, the Covid-19 Strategic Team and the Elders of PRCC advise the following:

- **Surveying The Members of Each Sunday School Class-**
 - Beginning July 6th, our adult Sunday School teachers will begin contacting the members of their respective classes to inquire about their desire and comfort for meeting together on our church campus.
- **Examining the Reports-**
 - Once our Sunday School teachers have contacted their class members, their findings along with the teachers' thoughts will be reported to the church office for examination by the Covid-19 strategic team.
 - The latest health reports and advice will also be taken into consideration.
- **Organizing-**
 - After examining the feedback from our Sunday School classes as well as the latest information from health organizations, the Covid-19 Strategic Team will determine which spaces on our church campus are best suited for Sunday school class meetings.
 - For the classes who desire to meet on campus, a schedule will be created outlining the available meeting times and spaces. Also, procedures and protocols will be created for classes to clean their meeting spaces after use.
 - Sunday School teachers will then be contacted to pick the best time and location for the class to meet.

Please know that the leadership of our church is anxious to restart physical meetings for our Adult Sunday School classes. However, no date can be set at this time for our classes to begin meeting again on our church campus. More details will be shared as information is gathered and health recommendations consulted.

Church Office: The church office will be open with the observance of social distancing practices. If you are to visit our church office, we ask that you respect the staff members by observing a minimum distance of 6'. Please do not visit our church office if you have recently been exposed to someone exhibiting symptoms or who has tested positive for Covid-19.

Building Use: Our facilities will be available for use during the week. To make a request to use an area on our church campus, please visit the "Calendar and Reservations" page of our website:<https://www.poplarridgechurch.com/calendar>.

Please Note:

- Each reservation will be reviewed on a "case by case" basis.
- Final approval of each reservation will be made by PRCC's office staff taking into consideration the size of the space being requested, the nature of the event, as well as the projected number of people wishing to use the space.
- Considering current health concerns, all facility reservations are subject to change upon the decision of PRCC's office staff.

Our Plan For Adding A Fourth Worship Service If Needed:

We will work hard to provide in-person worship opportunities for all who are interested. Attendance restrictions may require that we add an additional service to the three outlined in the previously mentioned schedule. Should we need to add another worship service, we will do so using the order detailed below (also requiring RSVPS).

Adding Worship Opportunities:

If a **fourth worship service** is needed, we will add an opportunity to **Sunday Nights at 7:00 pm** to coincide with our youth group meeting. Our worship times would then be:

- 8:30 am
 - 10:00 am
 - 11:30 am
 - 7:00 pm
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- If Poplar Ridge launches this fourth worship gathering, we would then encourage the families of our High-School students (who would be meeting at 7:00 pm on Sunday nights) to attend the 7:00 pm worship service while their student(s) is in their small group. Hopefully, this would also help to free up space in other worship services.

Cleaning, Screening, and Distancing Guidelines for Worship Services

During the online service RSVP process, all attendees will be asked a series of health screening questions. Anyone who has recently experienced COVID-19 symptoms will not be permitted to join a physical worship gathering.

Entrances to our sanctuary building will be propped or held open so that entrants don't need to touch door handles.

- All door knobs, handles, surfaces, etc. will be cleaned before and after each service.
 - Hand sanitation stations will be located at all major entrances, as well as in the worship space itself. Worshipers are strongly encouraged to use these at every opportunity.
 - Seating will be marked to help individuals and family units sit at least six feet apart from others.
 - Everyone in attendance (except for those leading the service) are strongly encouraged to bring and wear a mask. If you do not have a mask, we will have some available for you. ***Masks will be required for the 8:30 am service.***
 - To reduce contact during the service, there will be no greeting time or "passing of the peace," communion will be made available at stations, and offering will be received via giving boxes or through digital means.
 - The Gathering Place will be closed. In addition, no coffee will be served in The Gathering Place until at least September.
 - We strongly encourage everyone to ***regularly check their temperatures***, especially before attending a worship gathering or other event at Poplar Ridge. If your temperature is above normal levels, please remain home and consult your physician.
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Resources

1. Video introducing this plan from our church staff. **An Updated video link will be placed here once it is created.**
2. Links to RSVP for worship services. <https://poplarridgechurch.churchcenter.com/people/forms/138663>
3. Links to download church center app.
 - a. Apple users: [Click here to download the PRCC Church Center App from the App Store](#)
 - b. Android users: [Click here to download the PRCC Church Center App from the Google Play Store](#)

Covid-19 Strategic Team Members

- **Teresa Chase**-PRCC Administrative Assistant
- **Brad Perry**-PRCC Interim Youth Minister
- **Kent McQuiston**-PRCC Church Administrator
- **Heather Boatman**-PRCC Children's Minister
- **Jon Guy**-PRCC Worship and Groups Coordinator
- **Evan Wolfe**-PRCC Senior Minister
- **Angie Lowe**-PRCC Custodian
- **Mike Johnson, PA-C**-PRCC Member, PhysicianAssistant (JCMC)
- **Steve Pierce**-PRCC Elder, Pharmacist
- **Jeremy Blevins**-PRCC Board Chairman, Teacher (Sullivan County)
- **Chris Berry**-PRCC Member, Principal (TAD JR High, Elizabethton), Vol. Firefighter (Piney Flats)

A Note About Our Research And Planning:

There were certainly many aspects to consider when we began the task of figuring out how to resume physical meetings as a church. In order to get started, we practiced the “divide and conquer” technique. We split up into three research groups (Adult Ministry, Children’s Ministry, Youth Ministry). These groups were responsible for **researching, reporting, and recommending** to the entire Covid-19 Strategic Team. The recommendations from each research group were combined with the recommendations from other research groups for review and discussion by the Strategic Team. After review we presented a rough draft of guidelines and procedures to the elders of Poplar Ridge Christian Church for final approval.

The Research Groups Kept These Points In Mind:

- Help the Covid-19 Team create guidelines and procedures to promote the spiritual growth and protect the physical health of the members of Poplar Ridge Christian Church.
- Consult resource **organizations** and **other churches**.
- Seek to follow the recommendations from local, state, and national health organizations.
- Focus on their assigned ministry while keeping in mind the other ministries and operations of PRCC.
- Contact key volunteers involved in their assigned ministry for feedback and planning when necessary.
- Collaborate with other Strategic Team, Research Groups when helpful.
- Consider the physical environments used in each of their ministries and evaluate their setup to meet current health and safety needs.
- Review PRCC’s Ministry Calendar for the remainder of 2020 in regards to their assigned ministry and determine if events should be: kept as is, reformatted, cancelled, or be assigned a date to be evaluated at a later time.
- Look for ways to minimize risk and form solutions to potential problems in light of current health and safety needs.
- Keep the size, location, and population of our congregation in mind (not all church plans are equally applicable to Poplar Ridge).

Policy And Procedures For A Positive Covid-19 Attendee At PRCC

- Anyone who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever will be isolated and invited to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing.
- Upon learning that a member of the congregation has tested positive for COVID-19, we will consult CDC guidelines and local health department recommendations to determine whether we should immediately cease in-person gatherings, close for additional cleaning, or otherwise change our protocols.
- The confidentiality of this health information will be upheld in consistency with HIPPA regulations and policy.
- We will work with local health department officials when needed to monitor and trace COVID-19 cases and deep clean facilities.