

Coronavirus Protocols for Holding Sabbath Services

For the North Canton and Youngstown, OH, Pittsburgh, PA, and Wheeling, WV congregations of UCG,IA

(Condensed from official protocols from the *United Church of God, IA* and state and national guidelines.

As time and circumstance dictate, the following list may be subject to additions and revisions.)

1. 6-foot social distancing at all times for adults *and* children (except for family members). This includes seating areas.
2. Face masks required (exception for serious medical issues).
3. Be mindful to avoid touching shared surfaces as much as possible. The hall will be sterilized to the best of our ability, but viruses have a way of slipping through. Frequent use of hand sanitizer is encouraged.
4. Limits on number of members attending (approx. half our normal numbers).
5. Wait in vehicle until approx. 10 minutes before services, then make way into hall and to seats. Please, no groups or seating that put you in closer proximity than 6 feet.
6. If there is a greeter at the door, please don't shake hands, but do allow them to open and close the door for everyone. Greeters, please open the door so that it is a barrier between you and whoever is going inside or outside.
7. Service will have opening prayer, sermonette/sermon or split sermons, and closing prayer. To err on the side of caution, hymns will not be sung for the time being to avoid aerosol spread of virus in water droplets from increased exhalation during singing. (From the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e6.htm>)
8. After service, please exit the hall promptly, in approx. 10 minutes.
9. No food or drink.
10. When using toilet facilities, disinfectant wipes will be provided for you to sanitize the toilet handles and sink handles and door handles before and after use. Wash your hands carefully. Please be responsible for yourself.
11. Please, no handshakes, hugs, or other similar physical greetings.
12. If you are ill, please DO NOT come to services.
13. If, after having attended services, you begin to feel ill with symptoms resembling the COVID-19 coronavirus, please notify the proper health authorities and the pastor as soon as possible. We will then begin the process of quarantine for ALL members who attended that Sabbath.
14. If you are a health care worker at risk for high exposure to the COVID-19 coronavirus, please considering staying home and tuning in via the local webcast.
15. If you are over 60 and have significant health issues, please stay home and tune in via the local webcast. Likewise, those under 60 who have significant health issues, please continue to tune in from home.
16. For those with children we are asked to consider: if multiple families with young children attend, what would be the difficulty in keeping the children from playing with

one another, or maintaining appropriate separation? If this situation could become burdensome for you, please consider tuning in from home.

While these protocols are certainly very different from our normal Sabbath service experience and far from ideal, they will, we hope and pray, help us to avoid the spread of a disease that though for some is very mild, is for others extremely serious to the point of life threatening.

Our desire, by following these set protocols, is to avoid doing harm to one another, an expression of outgoing love and concern which is *the* way of life exemplified by Jesus Christ and God, the Father. The example we set as we conduct ourselves together can bring a positive *or* negative light on what the Church of God is and what it represents, namely, the God Family and the Kingdom of God. Our individual and collective choices matter.

Though we have limited fellowship time through this constrained format for Sabbath services, after the service is over going to a safe restaurant for a meal or enjoying fellowship in a nearby park or hosting a small gathering at home are options that can allow for more fellowship time. If so doing, please keep groups small enough to be mindful of social distancing.