

ReOpen Team, United Church
Bath, Gunnisonville, & Online
October 8, 2020

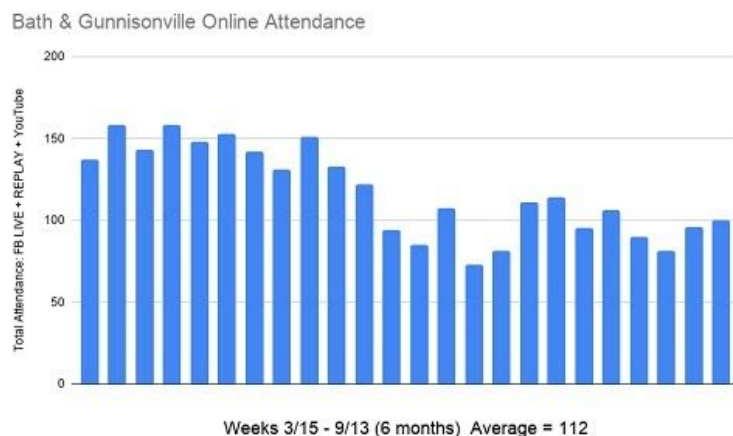
ReOpen Team

Dear Church Family,

Pastor Matt and a group of people from the Gunnisonville and Bath Churches have been following the status of the Covid pandemic, the government guidelines and guidelines from the United Methodist Church regarding how and when to safely reopen. We have given particular consideration to the generally advanced age of our congregations and the heightened vulnerability this brings to us. Some of us have attended other churches that have reopened to learn from their experiences and safety measures.

We want to be clear: we are not claiming that it is “safe” to worship indoors. Most experts believe that it is still a very real threat to the health of at-risk populations. Rather, the reason we are moving toward reopening our buildings is because some of our congregation desire to brave the risks involved in order to enjoy the fellowship and place of worship. Enough people might want to return to worship in the building so we are drawing up a detailed plan for what reopening would look like for us.

We realize that moving indoors is a controversial step. Our diverse congregation includes some individuals who believe the whole crisis is overblown (or even a hoax), and others who are deeply concerned that exposure could be fatal. There are some who are very eager to return to church even if it isn't a “normal service,” and others who want to continue worshipping online, and fear we are being reckless. We are attempting to steer a middle course, returning indoors if there is enough interest but avoiding activities or practices that are believed to facilitate the spread of the virus.



Since our cancellation of in person services Pastor Matt and others have worked tirelessly to create and deliver an online worship service reaching both churches that has been interesting, meaningful and very well attended. The number of views each week has been close to the number of people that attended our in person services before the pandemic. And we have reached new people with the online services. The level of giving has continued at a rate that can sustain us. We thank you all for continuing to support the church

with your prayers, participation in online worship and your giving during this difficult time. Matt and the online worship team deserve high praise for keeping our churches alive and well during these difficult times. We feel strongly that this online worship service must continue due to the large number of people that are finding spiritual growth from these services and the many who will not be ready to return to church for some time.

Attendance at in person services will require masks, hand sanitizing and strict social distancing during the service, shorter services, no social time after church, no lingering in the building, and a limit on the number of people in the building. We will work out more specifics later.

We feel strongly that when we do resume in person worship, while maintaining the online service, that

we do not want to create an unmanageable workload for Pastor Matt nor diminish the quality of the online worship experience that so many are finding meaningful. Our District Superintendent has stressed the need for our churches to proceed in concert with one another. This means that as we start the in person services will consist of viewing some of the recorded online service such as music and sermon and depending on the willingness of individuals to participate at the in person services certain elements of the service may be augmented with live readings, music and other forms of personal sharing. Pastor Matt is planning to attend in-person worship and at least lead prayers.

To some of you, all this caution will seem excessive. But please remember that your fellow church members may not share your comfort levels. Do not "invade the space" of those who are not part of your immediate household. If people feel they are placed at risk in the sanctuary, they will not return. And above all we don't want our church to be responsible for causing an outbreak of COVID-19.

To create our detailed reopen plan we now need your input. We need to know how many people would attend if an in-person service like the one described above is offered in the next few weeks. We want your decision to be made with no pressure in any way. We also need to know who would be willing to participate in the service as greeters, worship leaders, musicians, or audio visual techs.

Watch your phone! Pastor Matt will be calling you with a survey the evening of Monday, Oct 12. Pick up and listen up if possible! At the end of the recorded call you'll be asked to respond by pushing a button. You'll also have the opportunity to record a message. Your response will not obligate you but will give us an idea of how many people to expect.

You can respond to the survey from Matt's call, or online ([click here](#)), or by leaving a message at 810-221-1288. All the information is also on our church website at unitedch.com/reopen-team. Please complete the survey by Sunday, October 18, 2020.

We will let you know the survey results during a TOWN HALL church meeting at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, Oct. 20. The meeting will be on zoom and you can join on your computer or dial in on your phone. The ReOpen will share the findings, answer questions, and hear your thoughts.

From our heart we thank you for your continued support of the church as we navigate and attempt to create many new windows into our church. We are confident that with the grace of God we will meet the challenges posed by this pandemic and continue to be a church that sustains its family while continuing to reach out to the community and the world. We will get through this together and one day in the not too distant future all be back together in person.

Yours in the Love of Christ,

The Bath /Gunnisonville Reopen Team

PS. Complete the survey by Sunday, Oct. 18. One of these ways:

- Answer Pastor Matt's automated call on Monday, Oct 12.
- Online ([click here](#)). unitedch.com/reopen-team/
- Call (810) 221-1288 and record your answers.

Answer the two questions below and add any comments.

UNITED

OPEN HEARTS · OPEN MINDS · OPEN DOORS

ReOpen Survey

Your response will not obligate you but we would like to get a general idea of how many people to expect.

Attendance at in person services will require masks, hand sanitizing and strict social distancing during the service, shorter services, no social time after church, no lingering in the building, and a limit on number of people in the building.

As we transition, the in person services will consist of viewing some of the recorded online service such as music and sermon and depending on the willingness of individuals to participate certain elements of the online service may be augmented with live readings, music and other forms of personal sharing. Pastor Matt is planning to attend in-person worship and at least lead prayers.

* Required

Name *

Your answer

If in-person services like we've described are offered in the next few weeks, would you be inclined to attend? Yes, No, or if you really can't decide select "Not Sure". *

Yes

No

1. If in-person services like we've described are offered in the next few weeks, would you be inclined to attend?
Press 1 for YES.
Press 2 for NO.
Press 3 if you're really NOT SURE.
2. Optional: Record a Message
Would you be a greeter, worship leader, musician, or audio visual technician?
Tell us any questions for the Town Hall meeting or other comments.

PPS. Join in the **TOWN HALL** Church Meeting to hear results and discussion about ReOpening.

United TOWN HALL with the ReOpen Team
Tuesday, Oct 20, 6:30 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86293936584>
- Or dial (312) 626-6799
- Meeting ID: 862 9393 6584



THE REOPEN TEAM WELCOMES YOUR COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Jim Jackson, Chair, Gunnisonville Security Team
Janel Ingram, Co-Chair, Bath Security Team
Jerry Boyer, Bath Trustee
Tom Cooley, Bath, Infectious Disease Specialist
Nancy Drolett, Gunnisonville Administrative Board
Linda Gehrls, Bath Worship & Lay Leader
Dave Hundt, Gunnisonville Trustee
Kathy Hundt, Gunnisonville Worship
Patrick Johnson, Gunnisonville Building Cleaning
Matt Kreh, Pastor
John Suppnick, Bath Administrative Board
Jerry Taylor, Gunnisonville Lay Leader
Katie Walker, Secretary
Anne Winkel, Bath Building Cleaning