

REFUGE TEMPLE COLUMBIA



***RE-OPENING
STRATEGY***

Bishop Sylvester K. Reid - Pastor

TABLE OF CONTENTS



<u>Purpose</u>	3
<u>Sanitizing and Sterilizing the Church Building</u>	3
<u>Communicating to our Staff and Membership</u>	3
<u>Training our Staff for Our New Normal</u>	3
<u>Implementing and Enforcing Social Distancing</u>	4
<u>Taking Precautions Prior to Public Opening</u>	4
<u>Ensuring the Safety of Our Staff and Volunteers</u>	5
<u>Requiring Face Masks for Entry Into Our Building</u>	6
<u>If Worship Services are Initially Limited in Number by the Local Government</u>	6
<u>Adjustments to Communion Service</u>	7
<u>Adjustments to Water Baptism</u>	7
<u>Adjustments for Choirs and Music Ministry</u>	7
<u>Protocol for Outreach ministries (i.e., Hospital and Homeless Shelter Ministries)</u>	8
<u>Offering Collection</u>	8
<u>Protocol for Altar Call</u>	9
<u>Children's church, Vacation Bible School and Sunday School</u>	9
<u>Sunday School and Children's Church Staff</u>	9
<u>Special Church & Auxiliary Church Auxiliary Events</u>	9
<u>Food Service Ministry</u>	9
<u>Protocol for Church Auxiliary Meetings</u>	10
<u>Virtual Online Worship</u>	10
<u>Cleaning and Sanitizing the Church in Real Time</u>	10
<u>Roles and Responsibilities of the Ushers</u>	10
<u>Roles and Responsibilities of the Security Team</u>	10
<u>Prayer Room Services</u>	10
<u>Events at the R.C. Lawson Library</u>	10
<u>Weeknight Services and Bible Studies</u>	11
<u>Funerals, Weddings and Baby Christenings</u>	12

Refuge Temple Columbia Reopening Strategy

As we consider reopening Refuge Temple Columbia (RTC), it is imperative that we plan prayerfully and carefully so that we do not endanger the lives of the people God has entrusted to us. As believers, we agree to live by faith and to not operate in fear; however, we refuse to let our guard down believing that the Coronavirus crisis has passed. We also agree to be proactive and to act in wisdom toward our parishioners, staff members, and guests—especially those among us who are the most susceptible to infection.

In preparation for the reopening of the building, we must plan protocols in the following areas:

1. Sanitizing and Sterilizing:

- a. Train existing staff on new Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting standards in adherence with CDC recommendations.
- b. Hire and train additional staff to meet the new Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfection protocols.
- c. Implement specialized cleaning and disinfecting regimen with the purchase of equipment such as an Electrostatic Sprayer.

2. Communication:

- a. Public Service Announcements via our website, robocalls, and social media platforms, i.e., Facebook, YouTube, etc., will be used to communicate safety measures for all attendants.
- b. Video assistance, including continued televised messages, directions, and announcements will be provided by the media team.
- c. FYI literature in lieu of Government Directives, announcements during Group Conference calls and Facebook will be provided.
- d. Request that auxiliary Heads/Presidents provide constant reminders to the members of their respective groups.
- e. Continue the communication process via the prescribed methods, including Zoom, e-mail, and telephone calls.
- f. Communicate and request feedback from employees regarding their concerns and input, as well as our expectations of the employees upon returning to work.

3. Training:

- i. Provide virtual training for all employees prior to reopening the church. Training will emphasize new precautionary measures and policies that have been or will be put into place to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19.
- b. **Staff members will be trained on the following topics:**
 - i. What is Coronavirus (COVID-19).
 - ii. What to do if you are sick?
 - iii. Cleaning protocols for confirmed COVID-19 cases.

- iv. Steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick.
- v. Guidelines preventing the spread among staff.
- vi. Social Distancing.
- vii. Proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- viii. Differences between Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting.
- ix. New Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting standards.
- x. Reporting Protocols: If you see something, say something.
- xi. Training will be held via the Microsoft Teams or other video conference platform and/or limited in-person training to ensure compliance with safety and Social Distancing practices.
- xii. The learning objective is to ensure that upon completion of the training, participants will be able to:
 - a. Explain Coronavirus (COVID-19).
 - b. Name signs and symptoms.
 - c. Identify ways to prevent the spread of the virus.

4. Implementing and enforcing social distancing:

- a. Establish six feet markers outside and inside for physical distancing.
- b. Provide access to church mainly through the two middle front doors.
- c. Close Social Hall and all other doors leading to areas other than the Main Sanctuary.
- d. Provide seating six feet apart (measure seating and skip a row).
- e. Notify members that they will **NOT** be able to sit in their regular seats.
- f. Provide seating on a first-come/first-serve basis (*Request people to arrive an hour prior to service for seating. Accommodate “Reserved Seating” for selected members.)
- g. Allow families of the same household to sit together.
- h. Limit the flow of traffic to and from seats.
- i. Limit and monitor the flow of traffic in and out of bathrooms.
- j. Use barriers outside.
- k. Seat everyone by filling the rows from front to back (ushers/volunteers).
- l. Exit by row, orderly with the front door open. Remain seated until directed to exit—and no congregating outside.
- m. Set aside an allotment of seats on the Missionary side for Seniors.

5. Taking precautions prior to public opening:

- a. Conduct a virtual meeting prior to the suggested pilot and/or reopening date for training of all staff and to inform members of the new normal.
- b. Complete pilot run for approximately 50 members (not on a Sunday). This will provide the committee the ability to revise areas of concern.
- c. Require members to sanitize their hands first when entering the sanctuary.
- d. Mounted hand sanitizer stations (at least 60% alcohol) would be available in an area prior to entering sanctuary.
- e. Provide a receptacle for disposal of used hand sanitizers at the door.

- f. Take temperature of members/non-members before entering the building.
 - i. If temperature is 100.4 and above, the member/non-member will not be allowed in the building.
 - ii. If temperature is 100.4 and above, the member/non-member will be instructed to contact their Primary Care Provider and/or if they have signs/ symptoms of Covid-19 to seek healthcare attention.
 - iii. If it is an elevated temperature, take the name of the member/non-member, telephone number, and document instructions.
- g. Determine where seniors will enter the sanctuary.
- h. Seniors and handicapped/physically challenged members will be seated socially distanced in designated areas. It is recommended that women be seated on the right side of the church with easy access to the ladies' bathroom and that men be seated on the left side of the church with easy access to the men's bathroom.
- i. Handicapped/physically challenged persons to be seated in the back of the church according to social distancing guidelines.
- j. Suggestion: All wheelchair bound members should pre-register with the church office prior to attending service.
- k. Suggestion for senior seating: Main sanctuary right-hand side with the exception of male seniors who prefer to sit on the left side near the men's bathroom.
- l. In each bathroom a designated stall will be assigned for seniors and handicapped/physically challenged.
- m. Visible signs with hand washing protocols will be displayed throughout bathrooms.
- n. Notify members they will not be able to sit in their regular seats.
- o. Seating will be on a first-come/first-serve basis.
- p. Screening for entry to the sanctuary should begin at least two hours prior to service time.
- q. Signs outlining standard procedures/protocols should be visible at all designated entries.
- r. **Health/Nursing Services and Seniors:**
 - i. Thermometers: Check everyone's temperature before entering the building—anyone with a temperature over 100.4 will not be allowed inside the building. There will be a nurse present in the vestibule.
 - ii. Check parishioners for regulated masks.
 - iii. Require everyone who enters the church to wear a mask.
 - iv. Request maintenance staff to wear gloves if needed.
 - v. Strategically place hand sanitizers in areas of the church.

6. Ensuring the safety of staff and volunteers:

- a. Screen all employees, volunteers, and visitors by conducting a temperature check (working with the Health/Nursing Services).
- b. Continue social distancing. Wear masks and gloves as required.
- c. Provide hand sanitizer all over the church for all, especially upon entering the

church.

- d. Keep inside doors closed at all times for the church office. Provide signs that say *Personnel Only Allowed*.
- e. Schedule staggered staff shifts and continue some remote working to maintain social distancing and reduce employee interaction.
- f. Conduct virtual meetings with employees to address concerns. (*Meetings will cover new FMLA policy guidelines and regulations*).
- g. Provide virtual employee training for the preparation of reopening.
- h. Utilize the PA system to make frequent reminder announcements on subjects such as hand washing, sneezing, coughing, social distancing, etc.
- i. Find a specific place for all deliveries to be dropped off.
- j. Announce all visitors upon arrival to the church office (Security).
- k. Provide new COVID-19 Policies, in addition to the current Employee Handbook, to guide employees on how to manage this new reality. All employees will sign off on a copy of the new policy.
- l. Require mandatory quarantine (at least 14 days) for all employees exposed to COVID-19.
- m. Secure a designated room for possible sick employee(s) and volunteers and advise them to visit a physician. Health/Nursing Services team member will follow-up via phone.
- n. Utilize Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) through referrals.
- o. Issue appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) relevant to their role and standard safety practices to all staff members.
- p. Provide training as outlined in section 3.
- q. Modify work shifts and assignments to allow for best safety practices and social distancing.

7. Face Masks:

- a. Require Health/Nursing Services and Security to wear PPE, protective barrier for clothes, face masks and gloves.
- b. Require all members/non-members to wear a mask and ensure the nose and mouth are covered.
- c. Refer member/non-members without a mask to security administration
- d. Require masks be worn for the entire duration of the church service, including when exiting the building.

8. Implement the following if worship services are initially limited in number by the local government:

- a. Over-communicate rules and regulations
- b. Adhere to Capacity of the Main Sanctuary and the Balcony. With social distance measuring (6 feet apart), there are only 124 seats available for parishioners (the measurements were made as per 1 person...not a family)
- c. Main Sanctuary is 84 seats and Balcony is 40 seats. Does not include the Rostrum, or staff if they need to be seated
- d. Use a counter to determine the number of participants entering

- e. Consider reducing the time length of regular services
- f. Consider the following for seniors:
 - i. During the initial phase of opening, seniors should remain at home and continue to livestream services.
 - ii. Upon successful completion of the initial phase, seniors' re-entry to church services will be reevaluated.
 - iii. Seniors traveling via DART will be screened within the DART vehicle. Those with temperatures above 100.4 should not be allowed off the vehicle or should be placed in a holding area for the return of the DART vehicle or other transportation
 - iv. If someone becomes sick during services, the person will be taken to the nurses' office.
 - v. If 911 is required, the operator will be notified that they are seeking care for someone who may have symptoms of COVID-19

9. Adjustments to Communion Service:

- a. Use pre-packaged communion wine and unleavened wafer bread
- b. Distribute the communion to parishioners during "Communion Time" as they stand/sit in place - (Ministers and Deacons). No one will be allowed to walk to the altar for communion
- c. Collect the empty Communion remnants and discard them (Deacons)

10. Adjustments to Water Baptism:

- a. Ensure both the candidate and the minister are protected when baptism is conducted
- b. Clean the pool regularly after baptism and ensure the cleaning systems are in good working order (maintenance)

11. Adjustments for choirs and music ministry:

- a. Continue to use the Praise Team for Phase 1 of the reopening of the church. The Praise Team will consist of 6 to 9 singers. Consider rotating singers. Each singer will be assigned a designated microphone and will use the same one for the remainder of services.
- b. Praise Team Rehearsals: Following social distancing guidelines, we will continue to rehearse an hour before services. There will be no weekly rehearsals during this phase.
- c. Minister Joseph Green, Jr. will oversee Phase 1.
- d. Following government guidelines and our Pastor's instruction, once allowed to have more occupancy and things are deemed safe, we will move to Phase 2.
- e. Phase 2 will consist of the reintroduction of our choirs to the service. Still following the proper social distancing guidelines, we will space members out appropriately (considering using a diamond pattern with six feet of spacing between members). This gives us roughly 16 choir members, plus an additional 6 to 9 frontline singers if possible.

- f. Choir Rehearsal: Following social distancing guidelines, rehearsals will be in the sanctuary at the appointed times given by Minister Joseph Green, Jr.
- g. Minister Joseph Green, Jr. will oversee Phase 2.
- h. Choir members that will be singing at any given time will be given either wristbands or identification badges so that they can be easily let into the church before service begins. It will make it easy to be recognizable to the security team or ushers on duty. Use Praise Teams: Do not use the full team. Consider rotations. Assign microphones and use the same one every time.
- i. Choir: Consider suspending choir practices as forceful breathing and exhaling can expel the virus further if someone is infected. However, you could consider using smaller numbers as you reintroduce the choir to the service. Also, space members out appropriately (consider using a diamond pattern with six feet of spacing between members).
- j. Consider not using choir robes, as space for robe changing may be limited. Just as healthcare workers change or wash their coats after each use, so should the robes be washed.
- k. Wipe down/disinfect music stands, microphones, and cords after each use.
- l. Limit podium to the Pastor only.
- m. Pastor should handle all announcements and emcee the service.

12. Protocol for Outreach ministries (i.e., hospital and homeless shelter ministries):

- a. Place all outreach ministries (i.e., hospital, nursing home and homeless shelter ministries on hold until further notice.)
- b. Lift the hold only after inquiring first what the outreach facility requires from visitors and what safety precautions the facility has taken to receive visitors.
- c. Work with all outreach ministries to ensure their safety with the recommendations of the health professionals (Pastor).

13. Offering Collection:

- a. Use upstairs church office and downstairs room—with no more than 3-4 members in each area for administrative services (Deacons). Members to stay in their seats during offering
- b. Wear gloves and masks during offering and serve between empty rows as members place their offering in the baskets (Deacons).
- c. Provide offering envelopes in the back of the church in various aisles/tables. Deacons/ushers will have offering envelopes available to give to parishioners during offering time.
- d. Collect the main offering (tithes, offering, building fund, and consecration offerings) and speaker's offering simultaneously. Encourage all parishioners to fill out the envelope accordingly.
- e. Encourage online giving via Givelify.

14. Protocol for altar call:

- a. Continue to monitor the process (Pastor)

15. Children's church, Vacation Bible School and Sunday School:

- a. Children's Church, Vacation Bible School and Sunday School should be placed on hold for now and will be re-evaluated later.
- b. Evaluate guidelines regarding family social distancing seating. Children will remain with their parents for church services.
- c. Follow CDC guidelines and our Pastor's instruction and prepare better plan for 2021.

16. Sunday School and Children's Church Staff:

- a. The Children's Church and Children's Sunday School ministries are expected to put off regular operations for at least 3-4 months after the church building opens, to reduce risk of virus transmission and sickness.
- b. Use the Social Hall for Children's Church services, if proceeding, instead of the smaller enclosed choir room.
- c. Conduct temperature checks and symptom screening before people come downstairs, especially children. After they are cleared, this should be marked by a wristband or other indicator that they can go downstairs.
- d. Educating the children through videos and lessons like "Wash Your Hands with Baby Shark" (See YouTube link): <https://youtu.be/L89nN03pBzl>.
- e. Do not allow children to come to Children's Church unless they have been brought by an adult or guardian.
- f. Each child should also have a form filled out for them by their parent/guardian before they can remain in Children's Church. The form will include 1-2 contacts in case of emergency and any allergies/special needs, that are necessary to know. E-mail addresses and phone numbers of contacts will likely be necessary.
- g. Keep information confidential to non-staff/leaders of Children's Church if it is sensitive.
- h. Take attendance for each Children's Church and Children's Sunday School session. Proper attendance will allow staff and health professionals to track who might be at risk if someone contracts the virus.
- i. Have virtual and remote teleconference meetings until the appointed time until next steps are possibly to re-open.

17. Special Church & Auxiliary church auxiliary events:

- a. Postpone in-person special church auxiliary events; continue remote meetings with telephone conferencing.
- b. Follow the same social distancing guidelines if special church auxiliary events occur.

18. Food Service Ministry:

- a. Placed on hold our food service ministry and re-evaluate at a later date.

19. Protocol for church auxiliary meetings:

- a. Postpone in-person special church auxiliary events and continue remote meetings with telephone conferencing.

20. Virtual online worship:

- a. Continue to offer online virtual with the assistance of the media team.

21. Cleaning and sanitizing the church in real time:

a. **COVID- 19 CLEANING & DISINFECTING Training Session Plan (Service Master):**

- i. Learning Objectives: By the end of this training, participants will be able to:
 1. Name the difference between Cleaning and Disinfecting
 2. Identify the Approved Products for Cleaning & Disinfection
 3. Explain special circumstances that may require heightened disinfecting

22. Roles and responsibilities of the Ushers:

- a. Pleasantly greet and orderly direct parishioners to their seats keeping required physical distance.
- b. No bulletins to be handed out.
- c. Provide security and enlist ushers to be both inside and outside greeters. Instruct them on how to greet post-quarantine: **NO** hand shaking or hugs.
- d. Ensure doors are propped open or have the greeters to hold them open.
- e. Greeters and Volunteers should be able to answer questions on procedures and policies upon the return to the building. Train them beforehand if possible.
- f. Have greeters to monitor the bathrooms to ensure hands are washed and social distancing is followed.

23. Roles and responsibilities of the Security team:

- a. Respectfully manage the orderly flow of traffic entering and exiting the building (Security)
- b. Monitor what is happening in the building (Security)
- c. Request uniformed police officer's presence

24. Prayer room services:

- a. Prayer room closed until further notice.

25. Events at the R.C. Lawson Library:

- a. The R.C. Lawson Library will remain closed to events for the remainder of the year
- b. Management will re-evaluate the possibility of opening from time to time to determine when events are safe to resume

26. Weeknight services and Bible studies:

- a. Pastor will review as guidelines change
- b. Use more virtual services—keep live stream going for weeknight services and bible studies
- c. **Baptism:**
 - i. Wear a full-face shield while baptizing to prevent droplets from a person's mouth or nose from going into the face (Clergy).
 - ii. Baptismal garments are to be worn by the candidate and clergy and will be properly cleaned (maintenance).
 - iii. Wear clear latex gloves. Consider moving the counseling session to the Sisterhood room for more space.
- d. **Altar Work:**
 - i. Conduct dismissal/benediction prayer from the pulpit for the first couple of weeks to a month to minimize contact (Pastor, Clergy).
 - ii. Consider new procedure when we resume clergy/member contact for prayer...possibly shoulder contact only.
 - iii. Do not kneel too close to a soul that is at the altar praying or praising God (Missionaries).
 - iv. Refrain from asking the congregants to hold hands during prayer (Clergy).
- e. **Seating on the Pulpit:**
 - i. Separate the chairs on the pulpit for social distancing.
 - ii. The main row or front row of chairs will be occupied by the Pastor and and the clergy in charge of assigned Sunday.
- f. **Security:**
 - i. The Security Team, along with the Joint Usher Boards, will meet at a predetermined time to set up and prepare for our membership and guests (no tourists will be received until further notice).
 - ii. Maintenance Department should have markers spaced out according to social distancing rules.
 - iii. The members of the Security Team will ensure social distancing rules are adhered to by allowing entry on a single line at each point of entry.
 - iv. The rules will be enforced inside as well. There will be two members of the security team that will periodically check the building to ensure that all social distancing protocols are followed.
- g. **Restrooms and Lounges:**
 - i. Posted signs will indicate how many persons should be in the restroom at a time (four upstairs and no more than two downstairs).
- h. **Seating:**
 - i. Seat everyone accordingly keeping in mind the Social Distancing (4 seats between each person) (Joint Usher Boards).
 - i. Make exceptions for spouses and/or families of the same household.
 - ii. Make periodic announcements from the pulpit regarding the seating arrangements as well as all other changes.

i. Exiting:

- i. Exit the congregation by sections to minimize the close contact at the main entrance.
- ii. Utilize the doors located by the office as needed.
- iii. Security team members and the ushers will oversee the exiting operation.

i.

j. Funerals, weddings and baby christenings

- i. Follow & incorporate all CDC & State recommendations.





REFUGE TEMPLE COLUMBIA

4450 ARGENT COURT
COLUMBIA, SC 29203