



October 19, 2020

Dear Family and Friends of Memorial Congregational Church,

We hope this letter finds you healthy and well. Please know that though we are physically apart, our hearts and spirits remain tightly bound to one another. We hope you have been able to participate in some of the creative, inspiring remote worship and fellowship opportunities that Pastor Tom, our amazing staff, and our wonderful members have been able to provide during these most unusual circumstances.

Since the late Spring, our Re-opening Task Force has been meeting regularly to discern the best path forward for MCC's ministry in a pandemic and post-pandemic world. We have consulted the best guidance from scientists, government, the UCC, and other peer organizations, as well as our church members' perspectives and our own prayerful reflection. At this point, we are pleased to present the following three-phased approach to the evolution of MCC's ministry as we move toward a post-pandemic world. **We will continue to revisit and refine these guidelines.**

Phase	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All ministry activities should take place virtually/remotely or outdoors including worship, fellowship, and committee meetings• Access to MCC physical facilities is restricted to those with Church Council and/or Trustees approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hybrid virtual/in-person ministry with a preference for/default toward more virtual activities• Access to MCC physical facilities is limited to an "as needed" basis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Return to in-person ministry activities• Return to full access of MCC physical facilities
Timing (Phase transition decisions will be made by the Church Council)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COVID-19 daily new case rates are above 5/100k in Middlesex County according to covidactnow.org• Once rates are below 5/100k for 21 continuous days, we may move on to Phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COVID-19 daily new case rates are above 1/100k in Middlesex County• Once rates are below 1/100k for 21 continuous days, we may move on to Phase 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will remain in Phase 3 as long as COVID-19 daily new case rates remain below 1/100k in Middlesex County

Regardless of phase, if any members or visitors feel ill (e.g., unexplained fever, coughing, shortness of breath, etc.) or test positive for exposure to the COVID-19 following attendance at an MCC event, they should avoid contact with others and inform the MCC Office immediately (office@mccsudbury.org).

Phase 1

Our ministries since the spring are reflective of the approach of Phase 1. Pastor Tom and the staff continue to provide a rich online worship experience every week. Fellowship activities such as Stephanie's youth groups and the weekly book club occur virtually/online or outdoors. Committee meetings occur virtually. Staff work occurs remotely unless it requires them to be in the MCC facilities.

Anyone entering MCC's facilities or grounds is required to:

- Wear a mask
- Use hand sanitizer upon building entry
- Socially distance
- Regularly wash their hands and disinfect their working area
- Sign the entry log

The church is practicing a more rigorous schedule of cleaning and disinfection to ensure the hygiene of our facilities.

We will remain in Phase 1 until after daily new cases of COVID-19 fall below 5 per 100k for 21 continuous days in Middlesex County according to covidactnow.org.

Phase 2

In phase 2, we will begin to reintroduce in-person elements of our ministries, as we continue to follow the guidance of science and the government in terms of limits on numbers of people in enclosed spaces. **We will provide additional guidance about in-person worship and fellowship as we get closer to entering Phase 2.**

For example:

- We will explore limited in-person indoors and outdoors worship and fellowship opportunities and events that allow for appropriate social distancing
- Choir and vocal singing generally will continue to be restricted due to the risk they pose for coronavirus transmission
- Committees may meet at the church as long as social distancing is practiced (but virtual/online meetings are still the preferred mode of meeting in Phase 2)

Staff members may return to MCC facilities to do their work on a regular basis if they want, but they will not be required to.

We may dictate specific entry and exit paths and points to limit congestion in the church. The elevator will be limited to one person at a time (plus one caregiver, if necessary).

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- Wear a mask
- Use hand sanitizer upon building entry
- Socially distance
- Regularly wash their hands and disinfect their working area
- Sign the entry log

The church will continue to practice a more rigorous schedule of cleaning and disinfection to ensure the hygiene of our facilities.

We will remain in Phase 2 until after daily new cases of COVID-19 fall below 1 per 100k for 21 continuous days in Middlesex County according to covidactnow.org.

Phase 3

In phase 3, we will return to full levels of in-person activities and facilities access if scientific guidelines indicate that it is safe to do so.

We will remain in Phase 3 as long as daily new cases of COVID-19 remain below 1 per 100k in Middlesex County according to covidactnow.org.

A silver lining of the COVID-19 pandemic is that it allowed us to explore the potential and possibilities of virtual MCC ministries. Our online worship services have allowed us to minister effectively to people far beyond our geographic region. We recommend the creation of a new Task Force to explore the path to a permanent inclusion of virtual ministries at MCC, which would allow us to fulfill our mission at a greater scope and scale.

It bears repeating: regardless of phase, if any members or visitors feel ill (e.g., unexplained fever, coughing, shortness of breath, etc.) or test positive for exposure to the COVID-19 following attendance at an MCC event, they should avoid contact with others and inform the MCC Office immediately (office@mccsudbury.org).

Please reach out to any of us with any questions or feedback about our plans to re-open. We are grateful for the congregation's inputs and prayers and look forward with faith to the future of our ministries together.

Shalom,

Carol Hannauer, Rick Hilperts, Gerald Kimber White, Rev. Tom O'Brien, Kasey Rogers, and Allen Vander Meulen
MCC Re-opening Task Force