

# **Mound Chapel Church of God**

## **Covid19 ReOpening Policy**

*(As of 6/4/2020)*

For the past several weeks churches around the world have faced an unprecedented challenge. The Coronavirus pandemic forced the closing of church doors for the first time in history. While church buildings have been closed, “The Church” has continued to be a refuge and blessing to millions.

While we do not yet know exactly when we will reopen the doors on Manchester, Mound Chapel needs to be prepared to safely open our facility to our church family and many others. Our government leaders and medical specialists have been monitoring this pandemic closely and are making decisions based on the latest information available.

It is important Mound Chapel responds favorably to the recommendations of our government and medical specialists. The Apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans (13:1) reminds us, *“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.”*

Likewise 1 Peter 2:13-17 explains we should, *“Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God’s slaves. Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.”*

Even though we gather online to worship God each weekend rather than in our building on Manchester, we must not forget worship is not something we “do” or “go to” on Sundays. Rather, worship is a lifestyle.

During this time of isolation Mound Chapel has been able to reach people who would not otherwise be able to attend our service. This includes those out of state, those who physically can’t (or shouldn’t) attend, and several who have never attended Mound Chapel in the past. God has seen fit for us to reach those individuals and we should continue to be available for them.

Thankfully, Jesus' tomb was empty. He was not there. Jesus loved being in the middle of the culture. He understood the most effective ministry takes place outside the temple. Let us keep that in mind as well as we continue to minister to our community.

Many people are watching the church closely to judge our response. Following Biblical principles, it is our intention is to heed the governmental and medical field's advice to the best of our ability. Even though we are a small congregation, we have several in our family who are more susceptible to the Covid19 virus. As such we will take every precaution available to us. First and foremost is the safety and well-being of all those who enter our facility.

### **The following notes outline the broad steps we will be taking over the new few weeks and months.**

For now we will continue to worship from our homes via Zoom until government and health officials declare it is safe to have meetings of up to 50 people. Our average attendance has been close to that number on most Sundays so we should be safe at that point. However, we will also implement the following precautions when the Stage 4 phase begins:

- We will only have one greeter. This greeter will be posted at the front door and will open the door for all who enter the building.
- We will allow **no more** than 50 people to attend in person until cleared to do otherwise.
- Face masks will be **required**. Masks will be available for those without one.
- Hand sanitizer will be available and **must be used** upon entering and exiting the building.
- Families who **share the same household** may sit together in one pew.
- Only **every other pew** may be used.
- Other worshippers will maintain the required **6' distancing rule** if sitting in the same pew.

- We will **not print** any bulletins or an order of service to avoid cross contamination.
- Those who attend should **avoid any hugging or handshakes**.
- **An Usher will escort you** to a pew, starting at the front of the sanctuary, to avoid passing by others who are already seated.
- At the end of the service we will **dismiss by rows** in order to avoid congestion in the Narthex and hallway. People will need to exit the building to avoid congestion in the Narthex or hallway.
- **No coffee or food will be available** before or after the service.
- We ask you to **stay home if** you are more susceptible, your immune system is compromised, or you have any symptoms.
- **We will make every effort to continue** broadcasting our worship service via Zoom. This may entail purchasing some addition equipment and training personnel in its operation.
- **These guidelines will be updated** in the event new data is available.
- Other procedures will be taken behind the scenes. Please see the attached addendum for more details.

**Thank you for your cooperation. We look forward to seeing you again soon!**

Blessings,

Pastor Ted,  
Your Elders,  
and the Official Joint Board Members

# Covid19 ReOpening Policy

## *Addendum*

### ***Modified sanctuary seating scheme in sanctuary:***

Original church design with 30 – 12' long pews provided seating for 210 or 7 per pew.

If we use every other pew beginning with the front pews & utilizing 7 pews per side, there is seating for 42 with 3 per pew.

Adding 2 per pew in each of the 8' pews at the back brings the total available seating on the main sanctuary level to 46.

With some pews providing seating for 4 or more members of a family living in the same household, the total available seating could exceed 46.

### ***Additional steps to be taken:***

- Remove all items from the pew racks including hymnals, bibles, & envelopes
- No passing of the offering plates. Attendees can deposit their tithe & offerings in offering plates on a table located in the Narthex as they exit.
- Disable the water fountains & hang signs indicating they are Out-of-Order & cannot be used.
- Purchase individual pre-packaged Communion supplies containing the juice & wafer. They are to be placed on a table in the Narthex so the attendees can select one as they enter the sanctuary. Attendees can dispose of the containers into waste basket as they exit the sanctuary.
- A box of Kleenex will be provided at all doors so attendees can use a Kleenex to grasp the doorknob to enter or exit a room.
- **All** pew backs & armrests must be disinfected before next use, not just the pew people sit in. As people stand, they often times hang on to the pew ahead of them to help them stand up.