

December 3, 2020

Dear Epworth Family,

We are doing everything in our power to ensure the safest environment for in-person worship service during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of our top priorities is protecting families and staff, so our church is following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Tennessee Department of Health for the management of individuals diagnosed with, or exposed to, COVID-19.

We have been notified of an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and who was present at the November 30 in-person worship service while potentially infectious. I would like to assure you that we have determined who may have been in close contact (within six feet for at least 15 minutes) with that individual. All who have been identified as close contacts have been notified.

Individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 are to self-isolate at home for ten days from the onset of their symptoms. The individual must be fever-free for 24 hours and have improving symptoms before leaving isolation and returning to in-person worship.

In addition, our Bishop has asked us to enter a phase of online worship only based on the positivity rate of the virus in our community. We have been asked to host worship online only when the virus reaches 5% or greater in our county. Williamson County is currently at a 15.8% positivity rate.

<https://bishopbillmcalilly.com/2020/11/23/guidance-for-worship-as-covid-19-cases-increase/>

https://covidactnow.org/us/tn/county/williamson_county?s=1380364

Our area hospitals have also made the following request -

<https://ewscripps.brightspotcdn.com/07/36/9b2d10094a1ab3f7d2c34f2c316c/open-letter-to-tennesseans.pdf>

In light of the positive case and the potential spread to other members, we will host worship online only for this coming Sunday, December 6. We will reevaluate in one week and determine the status of our December 13 service by Thursday morning, December 10.

While COVID-19 does not cause illness in every person who becomes infected, it is highly contagious. Let's work together to ensure we contain this virus so that we can resume in-person worship sometime in December.

Contact your medical provider for guidance if you develop any of the COVID-19 symptoms. Common symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and loss of smell or taste. Tennessee Department of Health recommends anyone with

symptoms consistent with COVID-19 seek testing, which may be done through a private provider or your county health department.

If you have questions about this information, please contact your medical provider or your local health department.

Sincerely,

Eric Turner
Epworth UMC Administrative Board Chairperson