

January 31, 2021

Dear McFarlin Family,

Back in March of 2020, McFarlin's Crisis Team made the difficult decision to suspend all in-person gatherings, including worship, as we were confronting the seriousness of the new Covid-19 virus. We were asked by federal, state and local leaders to be intentional about refraining from in-person gatherings and about following safety protocols, and McFarlin was and has continued to be committed to being a good neighbor, doing no harm and doing our part to reduce the spread of Covid-19 in our community.

As the state and community started opening back up in May 2020, McFarlin formed a Relaunch Team made up of clergy, staff, lay leadership and medical professionals with the purpose of developing a plan that would bring us back together for in-person gatherings gradually with the hope of being fully back together the way we were pre-pandemic. The Relaunch Team met frequently to listen for God's guiding Spirit, and to review guidelines from the CDC, state and local government authorities, and Oklahoma State Department of Health data, and to hear from local medical professionals. We also listened to the needs and wants of members of our congregation and staff. McFarlin's Relaunch Plan was presented to and approved by the Administrative Council in June 2020. Since the summer of 2020, McFarlin's Relaunch Team has met weekly.

In June 2020, our staff returned from working at home to working in the church building, our childcare ministries re-opened, our monthly Tuesdays Together community dinner resumed outside, and we saw small groups return to meet in the building. Our staff worked tirelessly to provide excellent worship and discipleship opportunities both in person and online that have kept us connected. The Food Pantry and Mobile Food Pantry continued to serve in person, and our Utilities Assistance ministry communicated with people needing financial assistance for their utilities over the phone. In August, we began worshipping together in person in Fenn Hall with a reduced number of seats available and while following safety protocols. In November, we worshipped in person for the first time in more than seven months in the Sanctuary.

In mid-November, we began to hear federal, state and local authorities urge everyone to refrain from gathering together through the holidays in anticipation of a dramatic surge in positive cases of Covid-19 and of a surge in hospitalizations that could put a dangerous strain on our healthcare systems' ability to provide care for everyone in need. McFarlin's Relaunch Team made the heartbreaking decision to suspend in-person gatherings in the building once again until at least January 2021 in order to care for our community, our healthcare workers and those needing immediate medical care, and to fight against the growing pandemic.

We know that medical professionals, hospital staff and administration have been carrying the growing burden of patient care for all these months. They are tired – but continue to serve. They give their best day after day. McFarlin's Prayer Shawl ministry delivered 95 shawls to nurses

serving at Norman Regional hospitals. They need our continued prayers and support during this difficult time.

Since November, we have seen Covid-19 numbers continue to climb. As of January 24, we have surpassed 365,000 positive cases in Oklahoma and are seeing over 2,900 new cases each day. Of course, we mention numbers and cases – but we can never forget that they represent people. Many had very mild symptoms, if any at all – and probably wouldn't have known that they had it except that they were tested. Others felt bad for a couple of days and then recovered without any lasting effect. But there have been a number of people who have become very ill, sick enough to be hospitalized. At this time, our hospitals are close to or exceed capacity on a daily basis. We have heard from numerous healthcare workers that patients are being treated in hallways and are being sent to other hospitals far from Norman or Oklahoma City because there are not enough beds available for everyone in need. And most tragic of all, over 3,100 people have died in our state because of contracting Covid-19, some of them members of our McFarlin family.

At the same time, McFarlin's Relaunch Team has also heard the cry of people in our church and community who are experiencing increased anxiety, depression and stresses due to the isolation and circumstances experienced during the pandemic. Suicidal ideations have increased during the pandemic, especially among young people. (If you, or someone you know, is struggling or contemplating suicide, please call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 for help). The pandemic is taking a toll on our emotional, relational and spiritual health, and we need to feel connected to God and one another now more than ever.

The Relaunch Team has agonized as we have tried to balance the needs of our congregation to gather together in our building and to care for the physical health and wellbeing of all people by doing our part to reduce the spread of the deadly Covid-19 virus. Our goal is and has always been to offer safe ways to gather together in person for worship, discipleship and mission. We are encouraged by the availability and administration of the vaccines, and we believe that a return to gathering together as we did pre-pandemic is drawing closer.

Rather than setting specific dates for when we will offer in-person opportunities, we have updated our Relaunch Plan to outline the phases of relaunching in-person gatherings. The Relaunch Team makes decisions regarding moving from one phase to another based on certain guiding principles. These principles include 1) reducing the spread of Covid-19, 2) keeping people safe by following protocols of distancing, mask-wearing and hand-washing, 3) doing no harm to our frontline workers, healthcare systems, and those needing urgent medical care, 4) honoring people's emotional, relational and spiritual needs for connection and community by providing opportunities to gather in person in the building, 5) respecting the capacity of our staff to carry out all that is needed for both effective in-person and virtual ministry, and 6) considering the long-term impact of our actions on the strength and sustainability of the church. Because some of these principles are in tension with one another, we weigh all the input and do our best to discern with prayer and great love for everyone what is best at a given time.

We are committed to relaunching in-person ministries in the building and to keeping people as safe as possible as we continue to do our part to reduce the spread of Covid-19. It is our deepest

hope that we will all be together soon. Until then, please be intentional about staying connected with your McFarlin family of faith by participating in worship and joining in a Sunday school class or small group. Look for ways you can serve those in need in our community. Let us know of anything going on in your life so that we can care for you and pray with you. Right now, we may not be physically with you, but we are spiritually here with you. We are still One Body, united by Jesus Christ. Not even a pandemic can change that.

Sincerely,

Pastor Rockford Johnson and McFarlin's Relaunch Team

Wendi Neal	David Kinney
Trey Witzel	Harris Phillips
Stephen Mitchell	Karen Hill
Scott Meier	David Gore
Kristen Howard	Matt Jankowski
Sandy Minty	Trudy Sickles
Richard Zielinski	Jonathan Bryan
John Morrow	Chuck Lackey
Daphne Fix	Yvonne Maloan

McFarlin Memorial UMC
Phasing Proposal for In-Person Relaunch
Updated January 2021

Phase I:

Day Care and CDO

- a. Controlled access to facilities during pick-up and drop-off with temperature checks for children and face masks for parents and teachers; including social distance markers for wait times during check-in.
- b. Day Care and CDO families will enter through the northeast sliding glass doors and exit through designated exit point.
- c. All children and teachers will remain within their designated spaces unless traveling to bathrooms or gross motor play areas such as the playground.
- d. For a more detailed protocol please contact Stephen Mitchell at smitchell@mcfarlinumc.org.

Staff Team

- a. Staff will report to work in the building.
- b. Staff will enter through the lower southwest entrance and be subject to temperature checks and will be required to wear face masks unless they are alone in their office with the door closed.
- c. Staff will wear masks that pass the “candle” test.
- d. Staff will be encouraged to conduct as many meetings as possible via Zoom, and when an in-person meeting is required, social distancing must be maintained, masks worn, and scheduled on the calendar.

Food Pantry, Mobile Food Pantry, UMM work teams, and Tuesdays Together Community Dinner

- a. Food Pantry and Mobile Food Pantry Policies
 - a. Volunteers will maintain social distancing (6 feet) at all times, this will be achieved by
 - i. Reviewing social distancing with all volunteers and how they can maintain social distancing while working at the pantry regardless of their volunteer role, i.e. preparing bags, setting out bags for clients, unloading food, mobile pantry, etc.
 - ii. Limiting the number of volunteers in the pantry to 4 at any time and in the Bethlehem House to 2 at a time when the pantry is NOT open (for stocking). The number will be limited to 4, inside the pantry and Bethlehem House combined, when the pantry is open.

- iii. Limiting the number of volunteers outside distributing food so that they can maintain a 6-foot distance. (3-4 persons + 1 performing periodic replenishment of supplies by cart).
- iv. To ensure social distancing with clients,
 - 1. Volunteers will not load food into the cars of clients. A long table/barrier will be placed parallel to the pantry in the north lane of the alley, along with the trailer with bags. Clients will pull into the south lane, step out of their car and tell the volunteer how many adults and children are in the household; food sacks/boxes will be placed by the volunteer on the table, then the client will retrieve them and load them in their car
- a. Volunteers will quickly check identification, will back away from the car to enter information into the Link2Feed computer system, will then verify the number of persons in the household and remind clients that they can come once every two weeks.
- b. A designated person on each shift will be tasked with monitoring compliance.
- c. Volunteers will practice good hygiene by:
 - 1. Reviewing hand washing and hygiene procedures with volunteers with hand cleaner available both inside and outside the pantry and Bethlehem House. Volunteers washing hands when they come to work and frequently as they work, especially if they have contact with surfaces that have been touched by others. Reminders not to touch your face.
 - 2. Surfaces touched by clients or volunteers should be disinfected at regular intervals and for spills or soiling with body fluids.
 - 3. Masks will be worn by all volunteers when serving. Gloves will not be used except for cleaning with disinfectant solutions as good handwashing is effective and sufficient for this situation.
 - 4. Clients and volunteers who are experiencing any symptoms of illness should not come to the pantry.
- a. Volunteers will be assessed at beginning of each shift for virus symptoms
 - 1. Temperature will be checked.
 - 2. Volunteer will be asked if they have diarrhea or difficulty breathing.
 - 3. If symptoms are present, volunteer will be sent home.

Any other group

- a. Groups cannot meet in the church building until McFarlin enters into Phase II. We encourage the use of digital gatherings or outdoor meetings while following physical distancing of at least 6 feet, the wearing of appropriate masks and frequent hand washing.

Phase II: Groups of up to 20 persons when determined to be safe according to the current data and conditions related to Covid-19 can use the building as space capacity and space availability allows for 6-foot physical distancing between all individuals, with size of group, location, capacity, availability, and time to be determined by the Relaunch Team or a staff team or persons authorized by the Relaunch Team.

Daycare/CDO & Staff

- a. Continue Phase I Policies

Groups and Volunteers Policies

- a. Resume gatherings and individual volunteering in the building.
- b. All persons will enter through the lower southwest entrance, be subject to temperature checks, will be required to wear face masks and will follow physical distancing of 6+ feet.
- c. Groups will request space usage and room set-ups through Office Manager Shouna Massey. All groups will be scheduled for space use on the 2nd floor.
- d. Groups must be scheduled on the church calendar; if a room is scheduled to be used by more than one group throughout the day, 30 minutes between group meetings must be scheduled so that the room can be properly sanitized.
- e. All hard surfaces and heavy traffic touch areas will be thoroughly cleaned. Each room will be disinfected with concentrated disinfectant spray, like the electrostatic sprayers that are available for schools and offices.
- f. All group members will enter through the lower southwest entrance and be subjected to temperature checks and will be required to wear face masks throughout the duration of their time in the building; group members will proceed directly to their assigned room, and once their gathering has completed, they will exit the facility through the southeast stairwell exit.
- g. All people entering the building will be required to sign-in at the southwest reception area to assist with contact tracing should someone become exposed to Covid-19 while at our facility.
- h. External Support Groups which meet after regular operating hours will be greeted by designated staff and paid security personnel to welcome them into our facility and provide entrance screenings.
- i. Designated signage through the interior of the building, to include floor markers, will be applied to direct individuals through ingress/egress.

Phase III: Groups of sizes greater than those in Phase II when determined to be safe according to the current data and conditions related to Covid-19 can use the building as space capacity and space availability allows for 6-foot physical distancing between all individuals, with size of group, location, capacity, availability, and time to be determined by the Relaunch Team or a staff team or persons authorized by the Relaunch Team.

Daycare/CDO & Staff

- a. Continue Phase I Policies

Groups and Volunteers

- a. Continue Phase II Policies

Phase IV: Groups of sizes greater than those in Phase III when determined to be safe according to the current data and conditions related to Covid-19 can use the building as space capacity and space availability allows for 6-foot physical distancing between all individuals, with size of group, location, capacity, availability, and time to be determined by the Relaunch Team or a staff team or persons authorized by the Relaunch Team.

Daycare/CDO & Staff

- a. Continue Phase I Policies

Groups and Volunteers

- a. Continue Phase II Policies

Phase V: No size limit on groups, still following physical distancing and wearing masks.

All groups

- a. Continue Phase II Policies

Phase VI: No size limit on groups, no required safety protocols.

Phasing Proposal for Worship Relaunch

Updated January 2021

These opportunities for congregational worship are designed to allow the greatest number of people possible to safely gather for worship based on the effect of the Covid-19 virus in our church and community. They are listed in order of increasing in-person attendance. As needed, decisions may be made by McFarlin's Relaunch Team to move forward in re-opening and/or to return to a previous, more limited in-person opportunity.

- 1) Virtual Worship only
 - a. Online Modern and Sanctuary services will be posted on McFarlin's Facebook and YouTube pages each Sunday.
 - b. Audio recordings of Sanctuary services will play on 1400AM/99.3FM or <https://sportstalk1400.com/> at 8:30 AM each Sunday morning (one week behind).
 - c. No in-person worship will take place.
 - d. Childcare will not be available.

- 2) Parking lot & virtual Worship
 - a. Online Modern and Sanctuary services will be posted on McFarlin's Facebook and YouTube pages each Sunday.
 - b. Audio recordings of Sanctuary services will play on 1400AM/99.3FM or <https://sportstalk1400.com/> at 8:30 AM each Sunday morning (one week behind).
 - c. A Worship service/services will be held in the church parking lots with the congregation in their individual vehicles on the south side of the church.
 - i. McFarlin's radio station will broadcast the audio for the service.
 - ii. Video will be shown as possible on outdoor screens, depending on weather conditions the day of the service and the need for video in the worship service.
 - iii. Ushers/greeters will distribute any items needed for worship as people enter the parking lot.
 - iv. Ushers/greeters will collect offerings as people enter and exit the parking lot.
 - v. Ushers/greeters, clergy, and staff will wear masks at all times except when speaking during the worship service. Those handing out items for worship will wear gloves.
 - d. Childcare will not be available.

- 3) Small in-person in Fenn Hall/small in-person in Sanctuary & virtual Worship
 - a. Online Modern and Sanctuary services will be posted on McFarlin's Facebook and YouTube pages each Sunday.
OR

- b. Livestreaming of one or both services will be available on the McFarlin website.
 - c. Audio recordings of Sanctuary services will play on 1400AM/99.3FM or **<https://sportstalk1400.com/>** at 8:30 AM each Sunday morning (one week behind).
 - d. In-person numbers will be dependent on available space/seating in both Fenn Hall and the Sanctuary based on any physical and numerical recommendations by the individuals and agencies outlined in the introduction to this document.
 - e. All safety measures (distancing, mask wearing, use of gloves for distribution, availability of hand sanitizer, directed seating, and RSVP, directions for entering/exiting the church, etc.) will be in place during Phase 3.
 - f. Childcare will be available by reservation for infants through kindergarten.
 - g. RSVP will be required for those attending in-person services for contact tracing purposes.
- 4) Larger numbers in either/both Fenn Hall & the Sanctuary & Virtual Worship
- a. Online Modern and Sanctuary services will be posted on McFarlin's Facebook and YouTube pages each Sunday.
OR
 - b. Livestreaming of one or both services will be available on the McFarlin website.
 - c. Audio recordings of Sanctuary services will play on 1400AM/99.3FM or **<https://sportstalk1400.com/>** at 8:30 AM each Sunday morning (one week behind).
 - d. The number of people able to worship in each space will be modified and increased based on physical and numerical recommendations by the individuals and agencies outlined in the introduction to this document.
 - e. More safety measures may be reduced as recommendations allow.
 - f. Childcare will be available.
 - g. RSVP may be required for those attending worship services.
- 5) Completely In-Person & Virtual Worship
- a. Livestreaming of both services will be available on the McFarlin website.
 - b. Audio recordings of Sanctuary services will play on 1400AM/99.3FM or **<https://sportstalk1400.com/>** at 8:30 AM each Sunday morning (one week behind).
 - c. All distancing and numerical recommendations are lifted. The only limits will be actual physical space available in both Fenn Hall and the Sanctuary.
 - d. Childcare and Sunday school will be available for children and adults of all ages.
 - e. Praise the Lord!!!! Come to worship!!!!