Updated Document
Dated September 11, 2020

(UPDATED) UTAH AREA SUPPLEMENT TO FIRST PRESIDENCY *GUIDELINES FOR SAFELY RETURNING TO CHURCH MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES*

FOR USE BY AREA SEVENTIES, STAKE PRESIDENTS, AND BISHOPS IN UTAH

In a First Presidency letter dated September 11, 2020, *Safely Engaging in Church Meetings and Activities*, The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve expressed a desire for members to gather for weekly sacrament meetings, whether in person or via technology, where conditions permit. A copy of the First Presidency letter and enclosure is attached.

Following that direction, we encourage leaders and members in the Utah Area to continue their efforts to return to Church meetings and activities. In counsel with the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the Presidency of the Seventy, we provide this (Updated) Utah Area Supplement, which supercedes and replaces our previous direction issued on May 19, 2020.

We invite stake presidents to counsel with bishops and their assigned Area Seventy in determining how best to proceed. Carefully study the above-referenced First Presidency letter side-by-side with this (Updated) Utah Area Supplement, take into consideration any specific needs or issues in your particular stake, and prayerfully develop and implement a plan to safely return to church meetings and activities.

(UPDATED) UTAH AREA GUIDELINES

Wards and branches in the Utah Area are approved to hold Sunday worship services and administer the sacrament as follows:

First Hour Sunday Worship Services at Church and at Home.

Under the direction and keys of bishops, wards and branches should now hold one Sunday worship service each week by gathering at church during their normal meeting times. Where multiple units occupy the same meetinghouse, stake presidents and bishops may need to make adjustments in meeting times to allow for the orderly departure of members, cleaning of the chapel, and arrival of the next ward. Members should be invited to attend the Sunday worship service in person or by broadcast (see details below). Members at higher risk due to age or underlying medical conditions may not be able to attend in person but should participate via the broadcast.

We have been impressed in recent months with how carefully and successfully leaders have ensured the protection and safety of members, while providing spiritually satisfying sacrament meetings. We now ask that attendance not exceed 150 participants taking into consideration the size and capacity of the meetinghouse, including overflow, and the need to follow social distancing and safety procedures. Families or individuals who reside in the

same household may sit together at Church.

The Sunday worship service should be less than one hour so congregations can safely leave the building and allow sufficient time for cleaning before the next ward arrives. **Each ward should hold one session of the Sunday worship service every week** at the appointed time. For those wards that have more than 150 members who desire to attend the Sunday worship service at church, leaders may alternate attendance each week so that all members who desire may attend on a rotating basis.

As noted above, the Sunday worship service at Church **should be simultaneously broadcast to ward members who choose to participate from their homes.** The broadcast should be streamed live and should not be recorded or posted to the internet. The Sunday worship service **should <u>not</u> include the administration of the sacrament during the broadcast**; it should be opened and closed with prayer; it may include organ or piano music as a prelude, as well as opening and closing hymns (no hymnbooks or programs should be distributed or utilized at church); and it should provide for two or more speakers. Wipes may be used to disinfect the pulpit after each speaker. **On fast Sunday**, wards should modify the Sunday worship service to provide for the bearing of testimonies.

Stake and ward technology specialists should be consulted regarding the process, application and/or platform that would be most suitable for broadcasting the Sunday worship service.

<u>Administration of Sacrament at Church and at Home.</u>

Following the closing prayer, broadcast of the Sunday worship service should conclude. Immediately after the broadcast, the sacrament should be administered at the meetinghouse in the same manner and with the same precautions which have been followed in Phase 1 sacrament meetings. Neither an opening nor closing prayer is needed; however, an appropriate sacrament hymn may be included. Local leaders should determine if singing the hymn is appropriate.

At the same time, upon cessation of the broadcast to homes, worthy priesthood holders, as authorized by the bishop, should administer the sacrament in their own homes, where a sacrament hymn can be sung.

Members desiring assistance with the administration of the sacrament at home should inform the bishop, who will authorize other worthy priesthood holders in the ward, such as ministering brothers, to prepare and administer the sacrament each Sunday at a time that does not interfere with the Sunday worship service at church.

<u>Second Hour Church Meetings Broadcast Over the Internet</u>.

We invite all wards and branches to begin holding second hour meetings on Sunday afternoons over the Internet. The virtual meeting should be live and <u>not</u> recorded or posted to the Internet. Interactive meeting applications, such as Zoom, should be used so that class or quorum members can participate. Second hour meetings should follow the same

alternating pattern which was followed by wards prior to the suspension of meetings due to the Covid-19 pandemic:

Wards and branches hold classes for youth and adults on alternating Sundays according to the following schedule:

- First and third Sundays: Sunday School.
- Second and fourth Sundays: Priesthood quorums, Relief Society, and Young Women.
- Fifth Sundays: youth and adult meetings under the direction of the bishop who determines the subject to be taught.

Given the limitations caused by Covid-19, Primary meetings will not be held during the second hour. Until further notice, we invite parents and leaders to counsel together to enhance home instruction and learning by teaching and singing with their primary-age children using resources available for primary children.

The Sunday schedule allows for home evening and/or home-centered gospel learning as determined by individuals and families. A family activity night can also be held on Monday or at other times during the week, according to individual circumstances.

Youth Gatherings. In addition to the Sunday worship services outlined above, we invite individual Aaronic Priesthood quorums and Young Women classes to plan activities in person and/or through technology. Large group activities with combined quorums and classes are discouraged. Physical gatherings of quorums and classes should be planned to ensure that social distancing and other safety measures are followed.

YSA Meetings in YSA Stakes. Due to the unique nature of YSA stakes and wards, including the desire of YSAs to interact face-to-face, we suggest that some exceptions be made to the above (updated) guidelines for Sunday meetings. These exceptions will allow YSAs living in YSA stakes to enjoy improved fellowship in quorum and class meetings.

Accordingly, we invite YSA units within YSA stakes (not YSA units in conventional stakes) to gather—in person or via the Internet—for the second hour meetings on Sunday. YSA stake presidents should give careful attention to and follow principles and guidelines for safe interaction at Church meetings and avoid excessive social mingling in hallways between meetings.

Establishing a Meeting Plan. We ask stake presidents to counsel with their assigned Area Seventy and with bishops in developing a meeting plan consistent with these (updated) guidelines. This plan should include the timing and logistics for resuming Church meetings and activities and include steps to ensure the safety of participants and compliance with the First Presidency Guidelines, the additional items in this (Updated) Utah Area Supplement, and state and local governmental regulations.

Where appropriate, announcements should be made at the beginning of the Sunday worship services to explain the sequence of Sunday meetings and how and when the

sacrament will be administered.

Funerals, Baptisms, and Weddings. We invite stake presidents and bishops to counsel with those who plan or participate in funerals, baptisms and weddings to "be both cautious and sensitive to the challenges associated with the sacred settings where feelings can be so tender." We reiterate the continuing need for caution and ask stake presidents and bishops to place appropriate limits on attendance at these events, providing for social distancing and other safety measures.

Additional Safety Precautions. In consideration of governmental guidelines relative to COVID–19 and those issued by the Church, we continue to emphasize the importance of maintaining all social distancing requirements, sanitary procedures, safety in administering the sacrament, the wearing of masks, and other approved practices when participating in Church meetings and activities.