



Return to In-Person Worship and Other Gatherings

*A Plan for a Healthy Church Building and Grounds
Environment*

By

The Walker Chapel Healthy Church Team

5 AUGUST 2020 DRAFT PROPOSAL



INTRODUCTION

The 2019 corona virus (COVID-19) has had a devastating effect on society, and despite limited degrees of improvements in certain geographic areas, it is expected to remain a serious threat for the foreseeable future. For the safety and well-being of all, extraordinary precautions are paramount as we gradually emerge from self-isolation.

This report outlines a specific plan for implementing safe and responsible measures associated with in-church worship and other uses of our church building and grounds. It was created in response to a directive from United Methodist Church Virginia Conference Bishop Sharma D. Lewis, and it utilizes as its primary resource *Taking the Next Step, the Technical Assistance Manual for Local Churches* authored by the Back to In-Person Worship Work Group of the Virginia Annual Conference, dated June 15, 2020 and updated August 3, 2020.

The Walker Chapel Return to In-Person Worship Plan is subject to review and approval by Rev. Dr. Sarah Calvert, the Arlington District Superintendent. It shall remain in effect until such time as the Virginia Conference Bishop alters or removes restrictions related to COVID-19.

This plan is based on in-person, in-church worship services, but is adaptable and applicable to other church sponsored gatherings both inside the church building and on its grounds, Specific plans are required for each non-in-church worship service activity, and are subject to review and approval by the UMC District Superintendent. Proposed gathering plans must be submitted to a member of the Walker Chapel Healthy Church Team (HCT) no later than 15 days prior to the proposed event. This will allow the HCT to conduct its review and submit the proposed plan to the District Superintendent no later than 10 days prior to the proposed event.

The Walker Chapel Healthy Church Team consists of:

Senior Clergy:	Rev. Lynne Alley-Grant
Lay Leader:	James M. Wright (Architect by profession)
Board of Trustees:	Christopher Hatcher (Trustees Chair)
Church Council:	Martha Schoonover (Council Chair)
Medical Professional:	Jean Anderson
Attorney:	Martha Schoonover (Attorney by profession)
Ushers:	Duane Musser
Facilities:	Jay Timmons (Chair, Vision & Facilities Team)
Staff:	Derek Dye (Administrative Office Manager)



BASIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLAN

1. Effective Date and Time of In-Person Worship

- a. The proposed starting date of in-person worship at Walker Chapel is September 13, 2020.
- b. A single weekly in-person worship service shall be held on Sundays within a 10:30a-11:45a timeframe.

2. In-Person Worship Attendee Pre-registration

- a. Those wishing to attend in-person worship services at Walker Chapel must pre-register for the upcoming Sunday worship service no later than noon of Thursday of each week. Pre-registration requires completing the Virginia Conference Health Acknowledgement Form (HAF). There are three options one may select in completing this form:
 - i. Complete online;
 - ii. Download/print the form and send completed form to Walker Chapel office;
 - iii. Call the Walker Chapel office and ask for assistance in completing the form over the phone. These forms will be only reviewed by the HCT and will be secured in a locked file in the Walker Chapel office.

Currently, an Entryway Health Acknowledgement is not an available option.

All HAF documentation shall be handled as personal, confidential information and shall not be disclosed to non-HCT members. HAF records shall be secured within the church office by Walker Chapel's Administrative Office Manager.

- b. Attendees may not pre-register for multiple worship services in advance.
- c. The HAF will also allow pre-registrants to indicate if they are first-time worshippers at Walker Chapel, or if they were not selected for attendance at the prior Sunday in-church worship service due to capacity limitations. The form will also include a legal notice regarding non-liability of the United Methodist Church and Walker Chapel (Please see Exhibit 5 of this report).
- d. The maximum number of accepted in-person worship service registrations will be limited to fifty-seven (57) people, including eight (8) of whom consist of pastor, lay reader, pianist, two videographers, and four HCT volunteer monitors (any additional worship service leaders and support staff will also be deducted from the 57-person limit). The maximum number of registrations is less than 50% of normal sanctuary capacity. As indicated in Exhibits 4-1 and 4-2, the maximum number of accepted registrants is based on an intensive number of live-together family members. Exhibits 4-3 and 4-4



demonstrate how an intensive number of individual congregants will yield only thirty-six (36) people able to safely occupy the sanctuary.

At the close of each weekly pre-registration cycle, HAF applications will be accepted on a randomly selected basis with priority given as follows:

- i. First-time worshippers;
 - ii. Those not selected for the previous Sunday although qualified to attend;
 - iii. Current week worshippers selected to participate.
- e. All accepted registrants will receive email or telephone confirmations by Friday afternoon preceding each Sunday worship service.
- f. Until such time as the pastor permits baptisms—and due to the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics that children under the age of two should not wear face coverings—children less than two years old will not be permitted as part of family groups. Once baptisms resume, children under two will be permitted without face coverings for the baptism portion of the worship service.

3. Requirements of In-Person Worship Attendees Prior to Church Property Entry

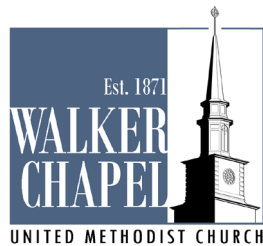
- a. Those accepted for in-person worship service attendance must review the Health Acknowledgement Form and check for COVID-19 symptoms before leaving their homes for church. This leave-home pre-check will include everyone performing a body temperature reading. Any reading of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit and above shall constitute a fever. If this and/or other symptoms are evident, worshippers must remain at home and are encouraged to attend Walker Chapel's online worship service. Worshippers are also encouraged to remain at home in self-quarantine for fourteen (14) days prior to returning to church if they have traveled to out-of-state destinations designated as requiring self-quarantine by executive order of the Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- b. Printed worship service bulletins will not be available at the church building. Should a bulletin be deemed necessary by the pastor, it will be posted on the church Website prior to each Sunday in-church worship service. Attendees will be encouraged to print the bulletin from home prior to departure.
- c. Offerings will not be collected during the in-church, in person worship service. An offering box will be available in the narthex to collect worship offerings. Attendees are encouraged to join online worship service attendees in utilizing remote means of making offering payments.



- d. All attendees and worship service leaders must wear face coverings at all times while on church property, both indoors and outdoors. Attendees must bring their own face coverings. Ushers will have on hand a limited number of disposable face coverings; once the weekly supply is depleted, attendees without face coverings will be denied admission to the church.
- e. If a person is unable to wear a face covering for any reason, the person will not be allowed to attend or lead any in-person worship service or other church gathering. This includes persons with breathing difficulties or those who refuse to wear face coverings for personal reasons.
- f. Attendees arriving and departing by automobile will be encouraged to park in alternating parking places, distributing parked vehicles across the entire parking lot. If it is necessary to park in one of the alternating empty parking places, vehicle occupants must wait for adjacent vehicle occupants to unload or load prior to exiting/entering their vehicles. A minimum of six feet distance should be maintained while the vehicle occupants are exiting or entering their vehicles.
- g. While approaching and exiting the church building on foot, attendees must wear face coverings and must use the designated entry and exit points while always maintaining a minimum of six-foot separation from others. It is recommended that prior to departure from home, attendees familiarize themselves with the building grounds vehicle and pedestrian circulation flow diagrams prior to arrival. Please refer to Exhibits 1 and 2 for the vehicle and pedestrian flow plans.
- h. Attendees must be screened by a designated greeter prior to admission to the church building. This includes a temperature verification. Attendees must maintain a minimum distance of six feet separation if a queue develops at the screening location. Greeters will not admit anyone who is not on the accepted attendance roster and/or anyone who is not wearing a face covering.
- i. Handshaking, hugging and other forms of body contact are prohibited before, during or after in-person worship services in the church or on its grounds.

4. Requirements During Worship Services

- a. Attendees must adhere to the church building circulation flow diagram contained in the Exhibit 3 section of this report.
- b. Attendees will not be allowed to sit in non-designated seating areas, unless under the direction of the ushers in order to accommodate live-together family groups. Once seated under the supervision of the ushers, attendees may not re-seat themselves.



- c. A minimum separation of six feet between non-related individuals and/or live-together family groups must be maintained in the sanctuary and/or the sanctuary balcony. A live-together family group is defined as a group of five individuals or less cohabitating for a minimum of fourteen days prior to the date of the in-person worship service.
- d. Families with children in attendance at a worship service should sit near the exits during the in-person service in case the child removes the face covering and refuses to put it back on. This allows a parent or guardian to remove the child from the service if the child continues to refuse wearing his/her mask. The child and parent/guardian will not be allowed to return to the worship service once they leave over a face covering issue.
- e. At this time, in order to facilitate lip reading the pastor and worship service leaders may wear a face covering incorporating a clear mouth shield for lip reading purposes if the mask fits snugly on the face. The pastor and the liturgist (if one) are required to participate in the worship service from separate positions with separate microphones (if used). In order to lessen the potentially harmful effect of aerosol transmission through speakers' face coverings, each worship leader position must allow a minimum distance of twenty feet from seated attendees. This distance must always be maintained during the worship service.
- f. There will be no communion or baptism services.
- g. In-person singing is not permitted. Humming through face coverings is allowable.
- h. Childcare during in-person worship services will not be provided.
- i. The use of the church restrooms before, during and after the worship service will be discouraged. If necessary, ushers will direct users one at a time to a designated restroom while maintaining social distancing. Each restroom user is responsible for disinfecting any contacted areas in the restroom by using a provided antiseptic wipe product.
- j. Walker Chapel feels the safety of everyone is of utmost importance and will not allow anyone to endanger the safety of its members, guests, and community. Requirements and protocols apply to everyone and will be enforced. If someone removes his/her face covering, they will be asked to put the face covering back on. If the person refuses, the service will be stopped, and everyone will leave. The person that violates the "mandatory face covering rule" will not be allowed back on church property until he/she agrees to comply with all the requirements. The same is true for failing to abide by strict physical social distancing (staying six feet or more away from others). If someone fails to abide by the physical social distancing requirement, he/she will be asked to do so. If the person refuses, the service will be stopped, and everyone will leave. The person that violates the



“physical social distancing rule” will not be allowed back on church property until he/she agrees to comply with all the requirements.

5. Requirements During Departure from Worship Services

- a. There will be no post-worship service fellowship social time or the serving of snacks, coffee and other beverages.
- b. Attendees must continue to wear face masks and maintain social distancing while adhering to the church building circulation flow diagram contained in Exhibits 3 of this report.

6. In-Person Worship Service Support Volunteers

- a. The Walker Chapel Healthy Church Team is responsible for recruiting and training volunteers to assist with executing the in-person worship service requirements and procedures set forth in this plan.
- b. Staff and volunteers must complete a Health Acknowledgement Form and comply with all that is required of building occupants excepting access to building corridors and spaces necessary on an operational basis.

7. Signage Plan

- a. The Walker Chapel Healthy Church Team will prepare, install and maintain visual indicators reinforcing requirements and procedures set forth in this plan. Such items shall include exterior ingress/egress access pathways, building entrance notices, interior ingress/egress pathways, and non-permissible sanctuary seating areas.

8. Cleaning and Operations Plan

- a. Walker Chapel has maintained its normal cleaning routine throughout its closing period, substituting various deep cleaning tasks in lieu of some of the normal building use cleaning tasks.
- b. The Walker Chapel Healthy Church Team must coordinate with Walker Chapel staff and the church janitorial services provider to assure that the following items are attended to relative to its Return to In-Person Worship and Other Gatherings Plan:



- i. Ensure the church has adequate amounts of cleaning and sanitization products. Check cleaners for EPA and FDA labels as being effective against coronaviruses.
 - ii. Clean handrails, tables and chairs, bathrooms, and the back of pews.
 - iii. Clean in-between uses and worship services (if applicable) by wiping down touchable and common surfaces.
 - iv. Clean the AV and computer equipment.
 - v. Reduce touchable items in all areas.
 - vi. Remove all materials normally available in paper or otherwise from the sanctuary, chapel, or fellowship hall (or other meeting place). Substitute projected slides and verbal instruction.
 - vii. Clean and disinfect all toys. Remove all stuffed animals and toys that cannot be adequately disinfected.
 - viii. Prohibit the use of water fountains. Have bottled water available to meet potable water availability requirements of the local building code.
 - ix. Minimize the need for persons to touch common surfaces such as doorknobs, etc. while in the building by leaving some doors open during services (except those required by the local fire marshal to be on door closers and not held open).
 - x. Individuals will need to bring their own personal hand sanitizer. Sanitizer stations may not be available in the church for use by members and guests.
 - xi. Attendees will be reminded to practice physical social distancing (stay six feet or more away from others), hand washing, and not to touch their faces.
 - xii. Access to the nursery, classrooms, offices, kitchen, playground will be closed during worship services.
- c. The HCT shall coordinate with Walker Chapel's Facilities Vision Team to assure that the intakes providing fresh air to the church building's mechanical ventilation/air conditioning equipment are fully open at all times to assure a maximum degree of fresh air circulation.

9. Communication Plan

- a. The Walker Chapel Healthy Church Team is responsible for assuring that this plan and any of its derivatives are readily available to as public information available on the church Website.



- b. Upon approval of this plan by the District Superintendent, the Walker Chapel Healthy Church Team will conduct an awareness campaign prior to any worship services or gatherings being held at Walker Chapel.

10. Emergency Preparation Plan

- a. The Walker Chapel Healthy Church Team shall designate an isolation room for temporarily holding of those individuals who are apparently COVID-19 symptomatic.
 - i. The HCT volunteer responsible for escorting the apparently symptomatic individual to the isolation room shall ask the individual for his/her cooperation in completing a health status form kept in the isolation room. In addition to recording any apparent symptoms, the health status form shall serve as a record of any other symptoms of COVID-19 not readily apparent:
 1. Fever or chills;
 2. Cough;
 3. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
 4. Fatigue;
 5. Muscle or body aches;
 6. Headache;
 7. New loss of taste or smell;
 8. Sore throat;
 9. Congestion or runny nose;
 10. Nausea or vomiting;
 11. Diarrhea.

The completed health status form will be secured in a sealed envelope and handled as personal, confidential information by the HCT, only for disclosure to government health officials and their contact tracing team, and upon request of the individual, the individual's healthcare professionals. The health status form shall be secured with the HAF documentation as described in Section 2a of this document.

Provided the individual responds positively to a question on the health status form asking if the individual feels capable of leaving the church building and



grounds in the manner he/she approached and entered, the individual shall be escorted to a church building exit separate from the primary entrance/exit point used by congregants.

- ii. If the apparently symptomatic individual displays any of the following symptoms, the HCT volunteer shall immediately seek emergency medical care:
 1. Trouble breathing;
 2. Persistent pain or pressure in the chest;
 3. New confusion;
 4. Inability to stay awake;
 5. Bluish lips or face.
 - iii. Contact information for the local public health authority and the street address of the church for 911 emergency call reference shall be prominently displayed in both the isolation room and the sanctuary narthex. During the call for emergency medical assistance, the caller shall state that the person needing immediate attention may have the COVID-19 virus.
 - iv. During a worship service or other indoor gathering when an apparently symptomatic individual is escorted to the isolation room, at the conclusion of the event HCT volunteers shall guide congregants out of the sanctuary on a route avoiding the general area in which the apparently symptomatic individual was seated.
 - v. Once all congregants have departed the church facility, HCT volunteers shall secure the sanctuary and all indoor exit pathways used by the congregants with warning signs indicating temporarily quarantined facilities closed to access. The isolation room and its access/exit pathways shall be included in the quarantined zone.
 - vi. Within two hours of the worship service or other church gathering associated in which an apparently symptomatic attendee is escorted to the isolation room, an HCT representative shall notify Walker Chapel's cleaning service to direct its staff to avoid the quarantined zone for a minimum of 72 hours. After 72 hours, the cleaning staff shall manually disinfect all contact surfaces.
- b. In the event Walker Chapel's HCT becomes aware of a return to in-person worship service or other gathering attendee or participant subsequently testing positive for COVID-19 or developing key symptoms, the HCT shall respond in the following ways:



- i. An HCT response team shall contact all attendees of the in-person event informing them of an attendee with a positive COVID-19 test result or displaying key symptoms. The advisory will not identify the name of the individual but will locate the general area of the sanctuary where the individual was seated (main level front/middle/rear left/right pews, right/left transept, balcony). The notification will encourage attendees to stay at home and self-monitor for symptoms, and if symptoms occur, to contact their respective healthcare professionals in order to determine the need for testing.
- ii. An HCT representative shall contact the individual testing COVID-19 positive or displaying key symptoms notifying the individual that he/she will not be eligible to return to in-person worship or other church gatherings until he/she has met the Center for Disease Control's criteria to discontinue home isolation (for the convenience of the individual, the current CDC criteria will be included in the notification).
- iii. An HCT representative shall notify Arlington County's Public Health Department once the HCT is aware of a worship in-person or other in-church gathering attendee testing positive for COVID-19. The HCT shall convene a special meeting to discuss and assess any directives or guidance the County officials may respond with.
- iv. The HCT shall notify those on the Walker Chapel master contact list that no in-person worship service will be conducted a minimum of one Sunday following the awareness of a COVID-19 positive individual having attended an in-person worship service. This announcement will also be posted to Walker Chapel's Website and Facebook page, reminding Walker Chapel's church community of how to access Walker Chapel's online worship service.



EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: Church Grounds Vehicular Circulation Flow Plan

- Exhibit 2: Church Grounds Pedestrian Circulation Flow Plan

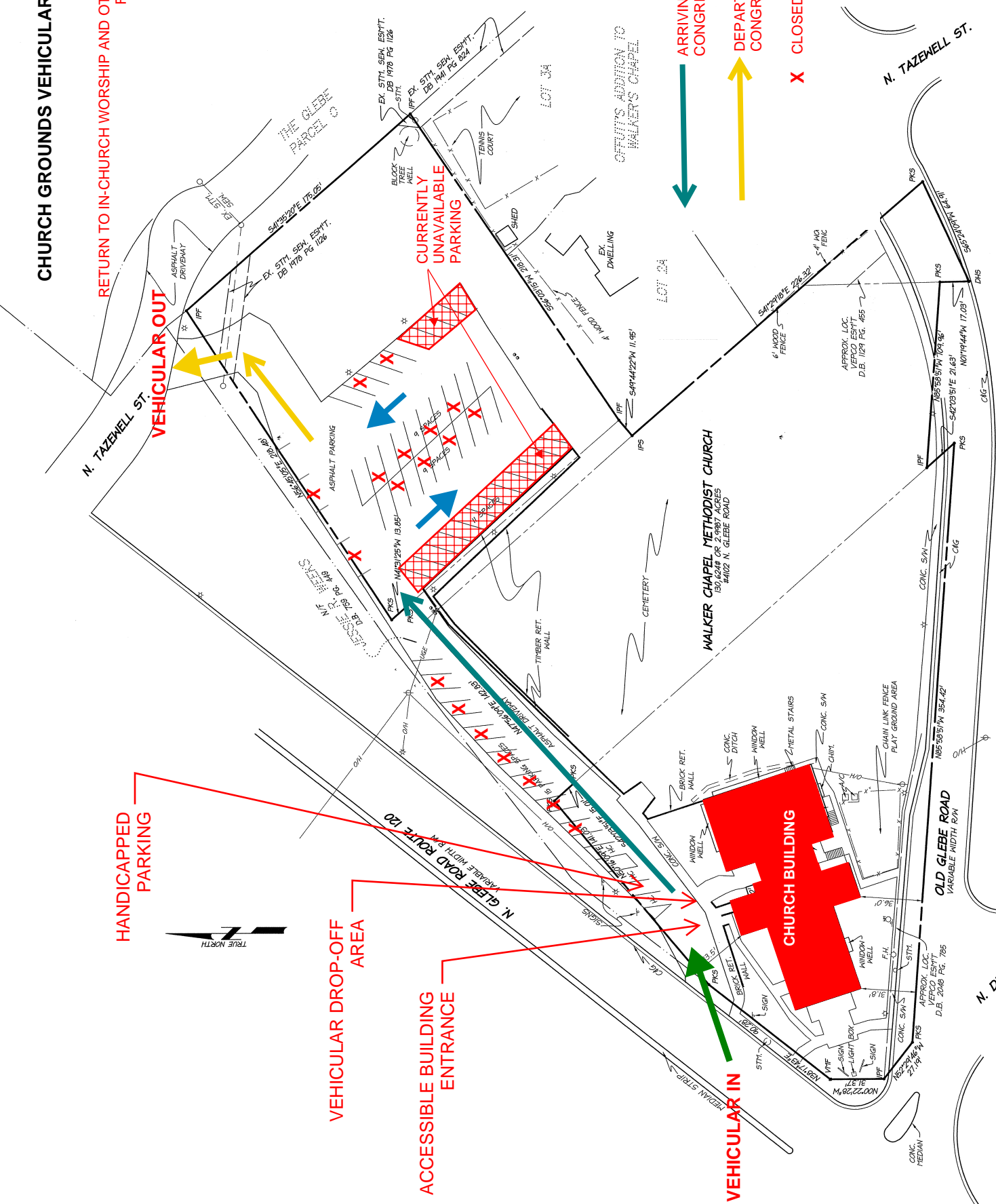
- Exhibit 3: Church Building Circulation Flow Plan

- Exhibit 4-1: Church Building Sanctuary Seating Plan, Maximum Configuration (Live-Together Family Intensive), Main Level
- Exhibit 4-2: Church Building Sanctuary Seating Plan, Maximum Configuration (Live-Together Family Intensive), Balcony Level
- Exhibit 4-3: Church Building Sanctuary Seating Plan, Maximum Configuration (Individual Congregant Intensive), Main Level
- Exhibit 4-4: Church Building Sanctuary Seating Plan, Maximum Configuration (Individual Congregant Intensive), Balcony Level

- Exhibit 5: Assumption of the Risk and Waiver of Liability Relating to Coronavirus/COVID-19

EXHIBIT 1
CHURCH GROUNDS VEHICULAR CIRCULATION
FLOW PLAN

RETURN TO IN-CHURCH WORSHIP AND OTHER GATHERINGS
 FACILITY USE PLAN
 5 AUGUST 2020



HANDICAPPED PARKING

VEHICULAR DROP-OFF AREA

ACCESSIBLE BUILDING ENTRANCE

VEHICULAR IN

VEHICULAR OUT

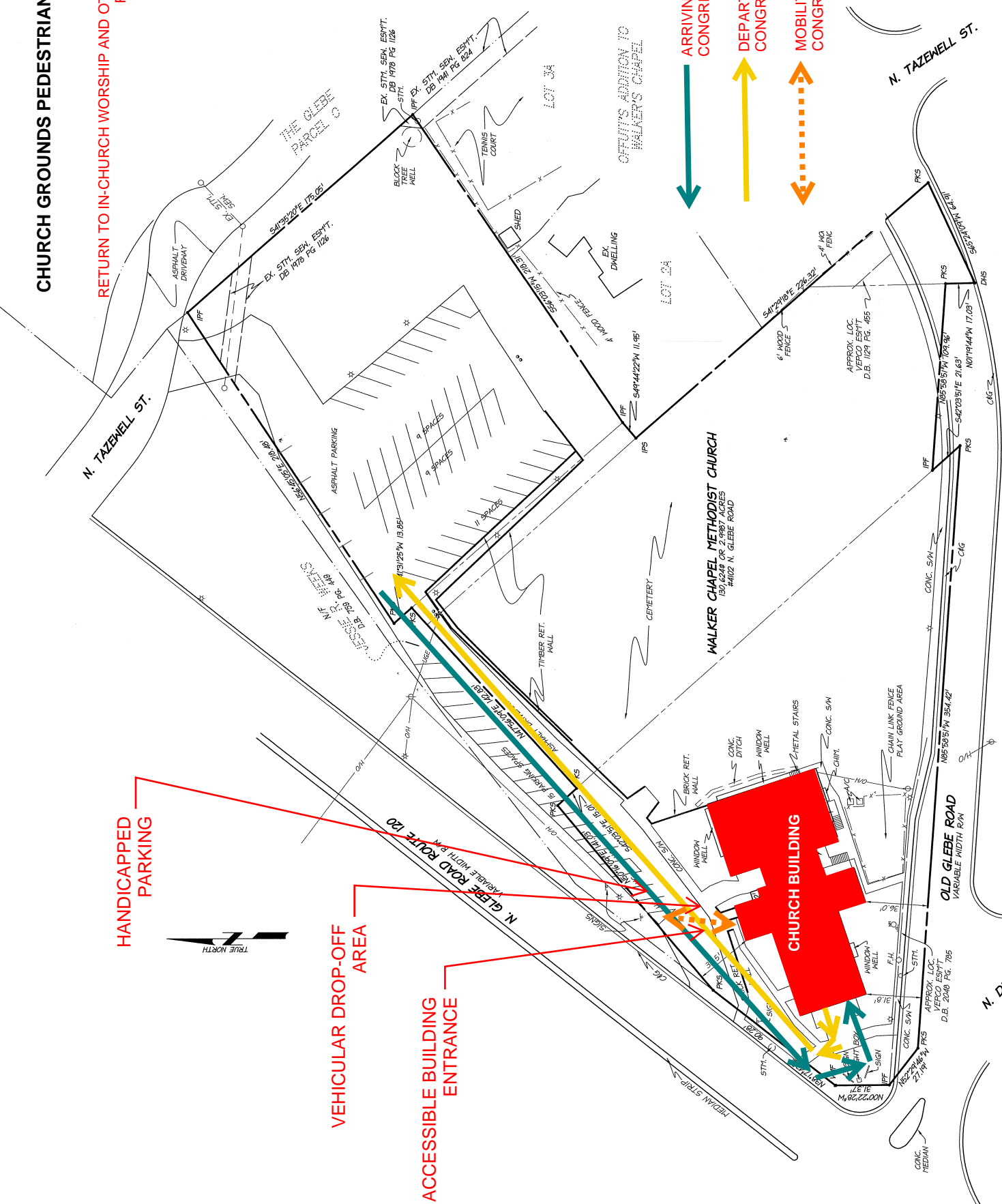
ARRIVING CONGREGANTS

DEPARTING CONGREGANTS

X CLOSED PARKING PLACE

**EXHIBIT 2
CHURCH GROUNDS PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION
FLOW PLAN**

**RETURN TO IN-CHURCH WORSHIP AND OTHER GATHERINGS
FACILITY USE PLAN**
5 AUGUST 2020



**HANDICAPPED
PARKING**

**VEHICULAR DROP-OFF
AREA**

**ACCESSIBLE BUILDING
ENTRANCE**

**ARRIVING
CONGREGANTS**

**DEPARTING
CONGREGANTS**

**MOBILITY IMPAIRED
CONGREGANT**

EXHIBIT 3
CHURCH BUILDING CIRCULATION FLOW PLAN
 MAXIMUM CONFIGURATION
 MAIN LEVEL

RETURN TO IN-CHURCH WORSHIP AND OTHER GATHERINGS FACILITY USE PLAN
 5 AUGUST 2020



ISOLATION ROOM
 EXIT ONLY
 TO/FROM
 ISOLATION ROOM

2-PERSON (1 PERSON + 1 CARETAKER) ELEVATOR
 FROM ACCESSIBLE LOWER LEVEL BUILDING
 ENTRANCE

REGISTRATION CHECK

TEMPERATURE
 CHECK

STAIRWAY TO/FROM
 BALCONY

ARRIVING CONGREGANTS

DEPARTING CONGREGANTS

ESCORTED CONGREGANT

PASSAGE RESTRICTED

HCT MONITOR

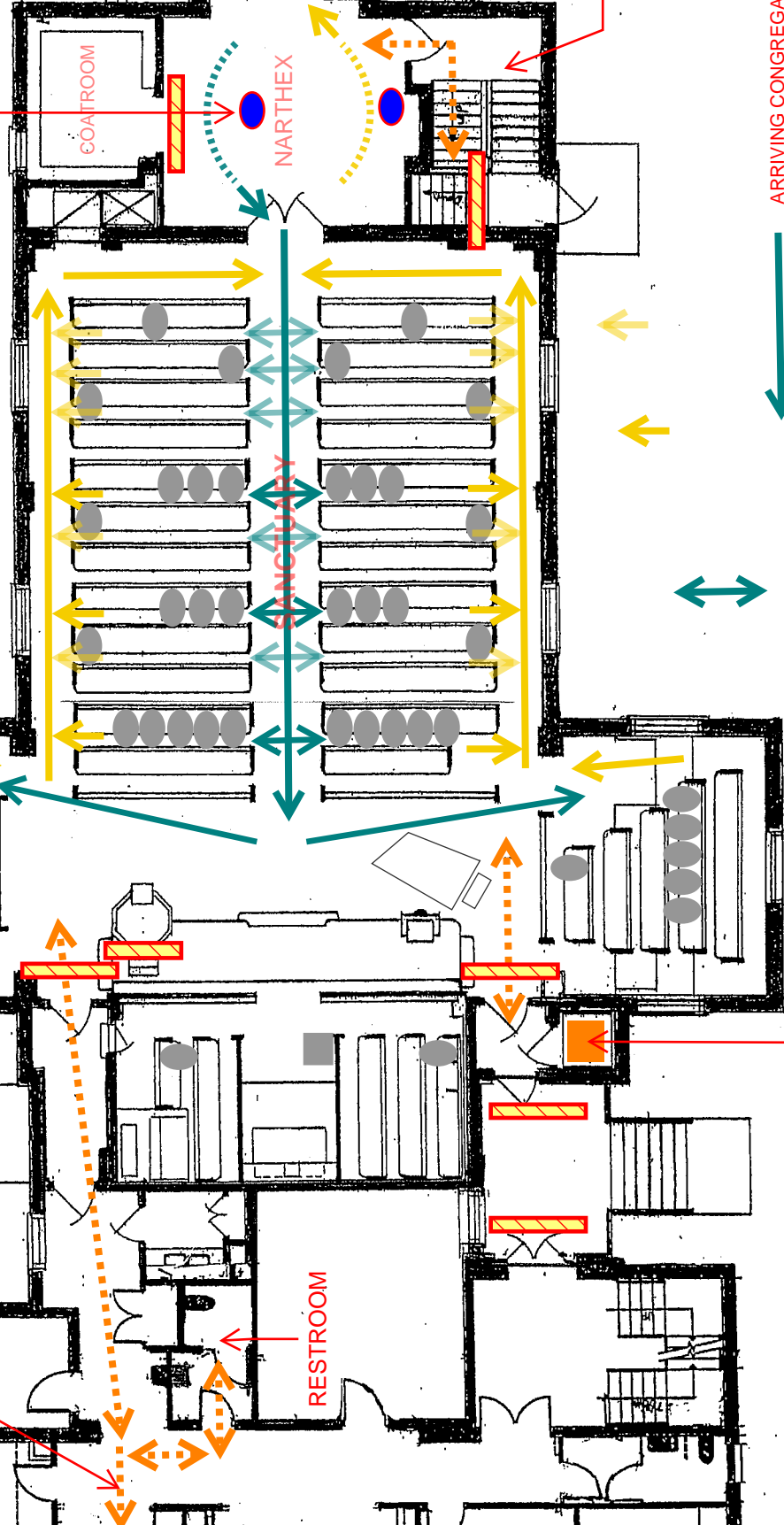
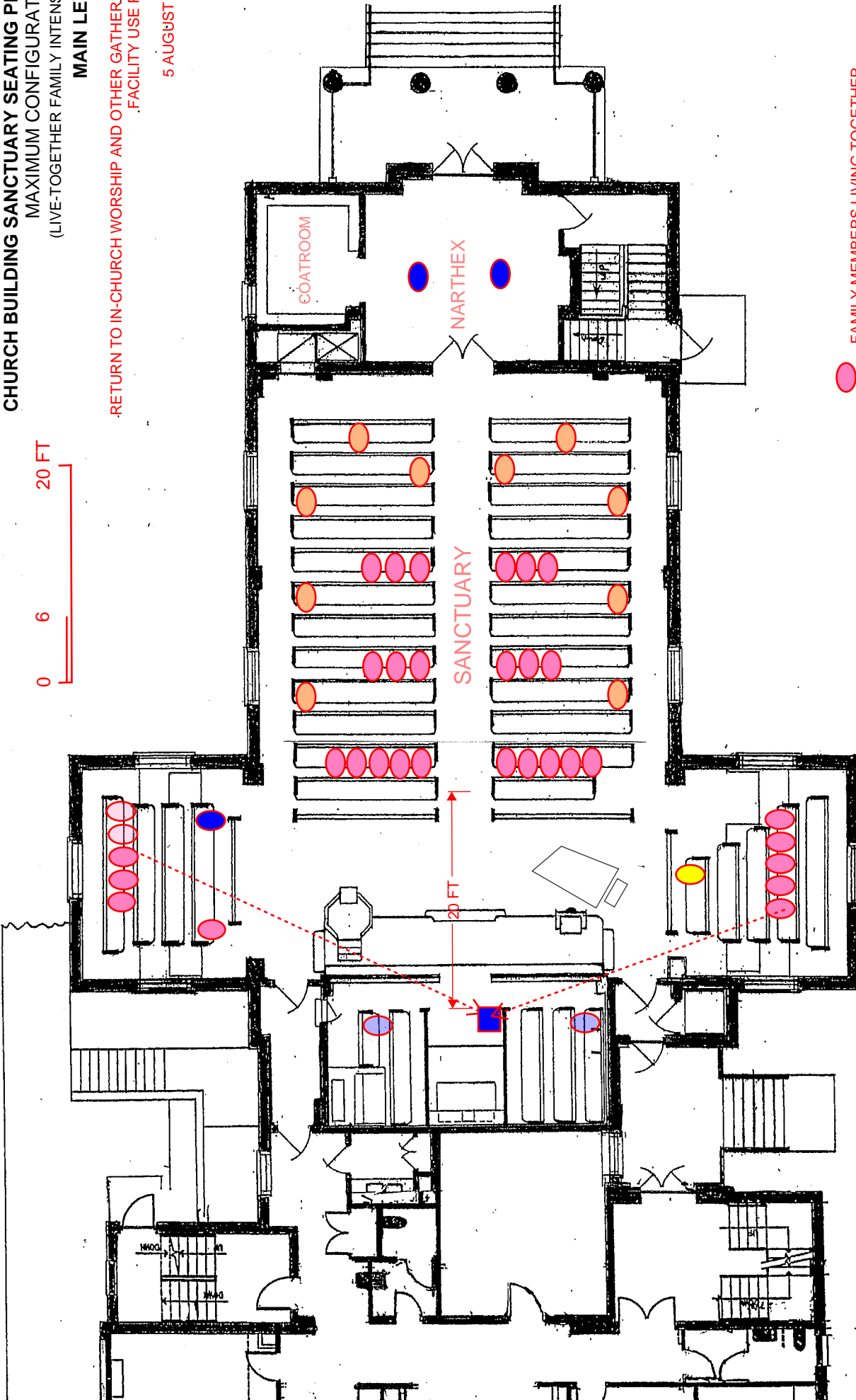


EXHIBIT 4
CHURCH BUILDING SANCTUARY SEATING PLAN
 MAXIMUM CONFIGURATION
 (LIVE-TOGETHER FAMILY INTENSIVE)
MAIN LEVEL

RETURN TO IN-CHURCH WORSHIP AND OTHER GATHERINGS
 FACILITY USE PLAN
 5 AUGUST 2020



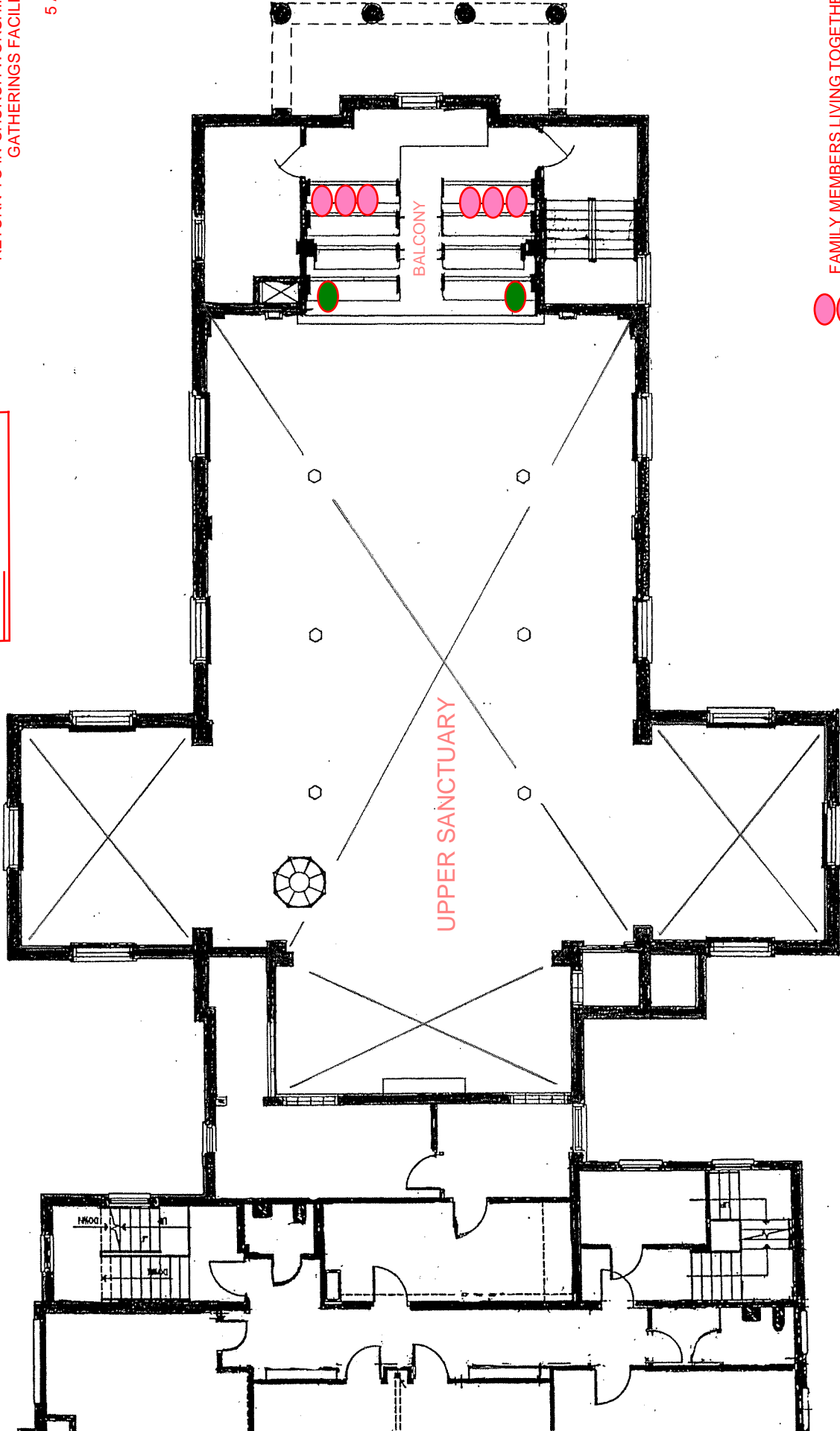
- FAMILY MEMBERS LIVING TOGETHER
- INDIVIDUAL PERSON
- SPEAKING POSITION
- SPEAKER SEATING POSITION
- PIANIST SEATING POSITION
- HCT MONITOR

EXHIBIT 4
CHURCH BUILDING SANCTUARY SEATING PLAN
MAXIMUM CONFIGURATION
(LIVE-TOGETHER FAMILY INTENSIVE)

BALCONY LEVEL

RETURN TO IN-CHURCH WORSHIP AND OTHER
GATHERINGS FACILITY USE PLAN

5 AUGUST 2020



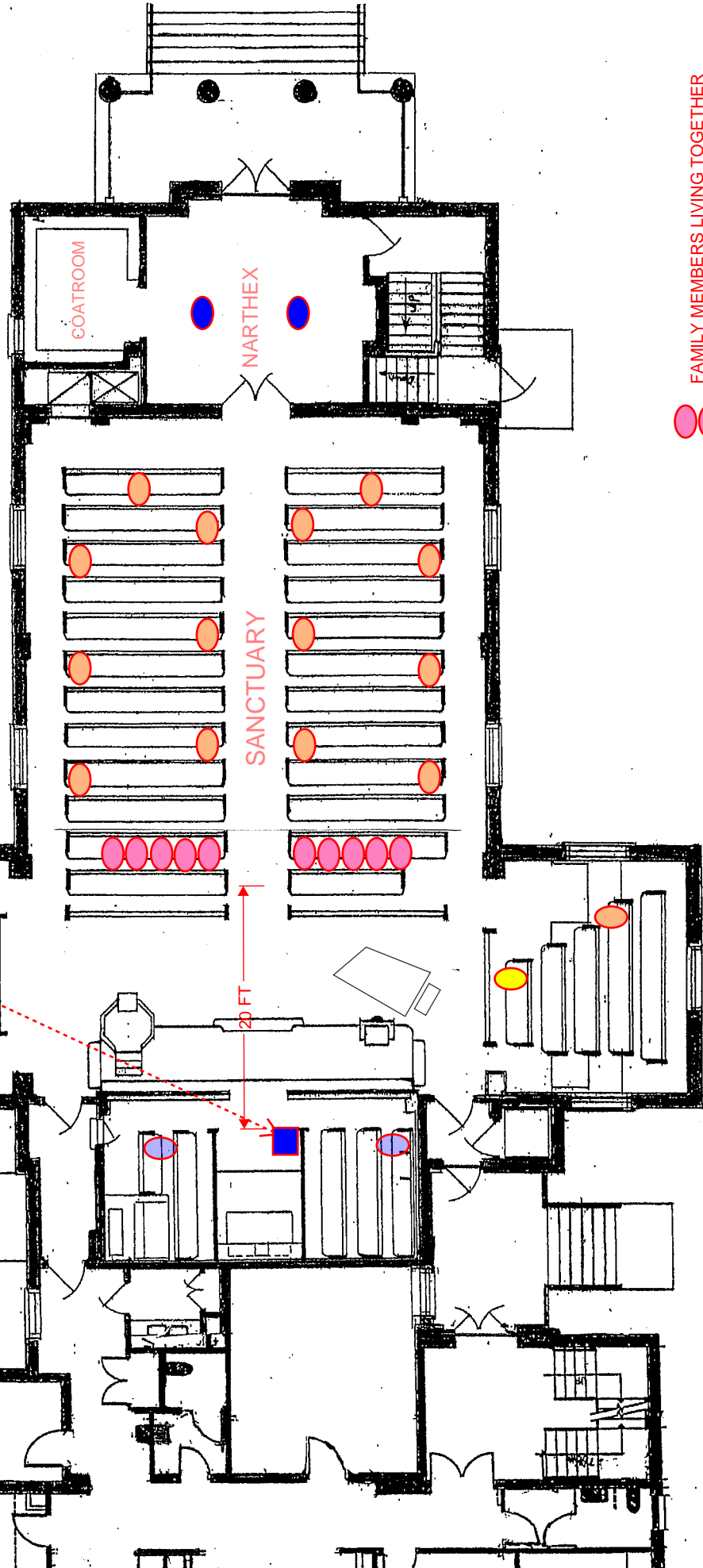
FAMILY MEMBERS LIVING TOGETHER



AUDIOVIDEO PERSONNEL

EXHIBIT 4
CHURCH BUILDING SANCTUARY SEATING PLAN
 MINIMUM CONFIGURATION
 (INDIVIDUAL CONGREGANT INTENSIVE)
MAIN LEVEL

RETURN TO IN-CHURCH WORSHIP AND OTHER GATHERINGS
 FACILITY USE PLAN
 5 AUGUST 2020









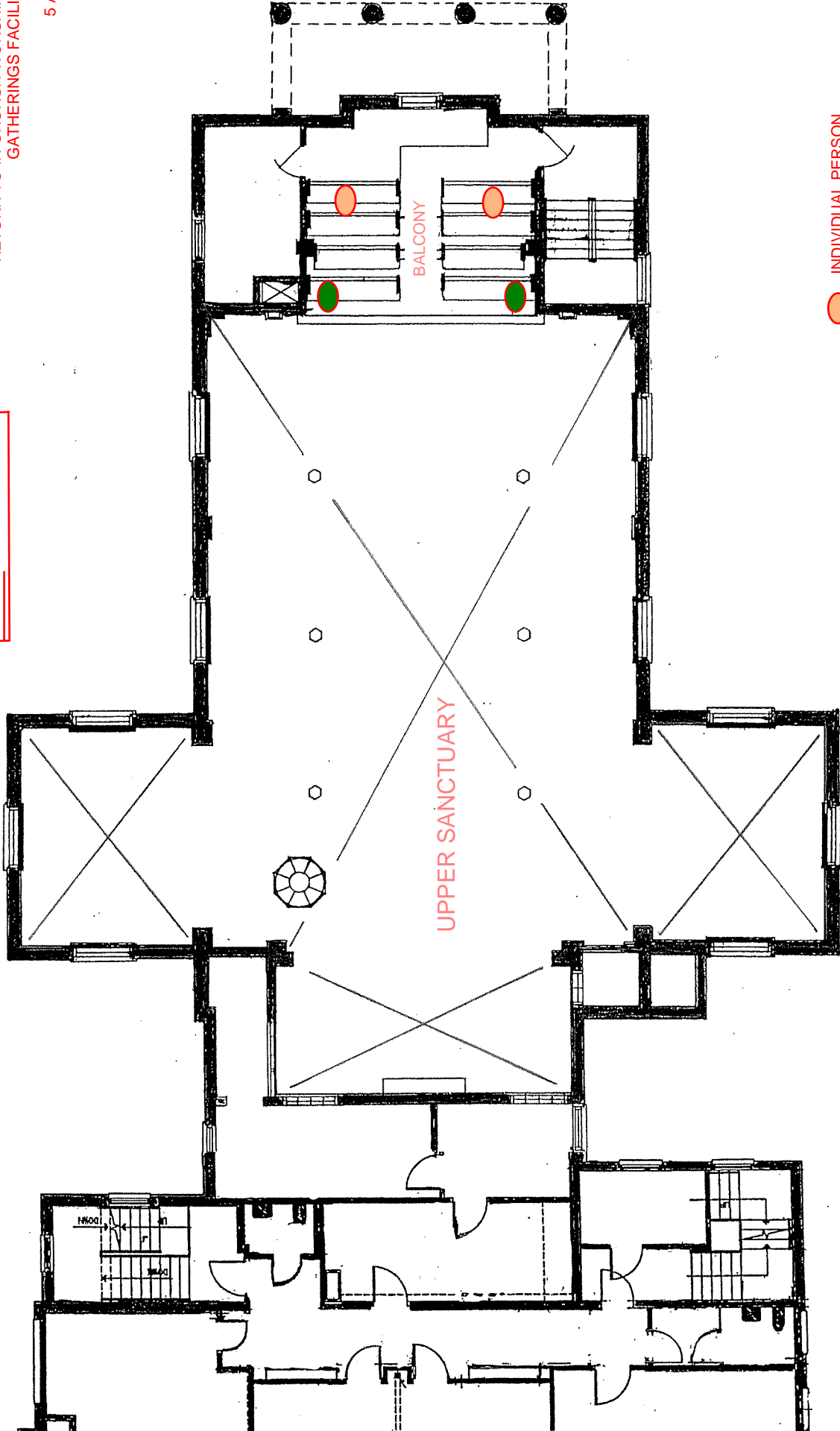
-  FAMILY MEMBERS LIVING TOGETHER
-  INDIVIDUAL PERSON
-  SPEAKING POSITION
-  SPEAKER SEATING POSITION
-  PIANIST SEATING POSITION
-  HCT MONITOR

EXHIBIT 4
CHURCH BUILDING SANCTUARY SEATING PLAN
MINIMUM CONFIGURATION
(INDIVIDUAL INTENSIVE)

BALCONY LEVEL

RETURN TO IN-CHURCH WORSHIP AND OTHER
GATHERINGS FACILITY USE PLAN

5 AUGUST 2020



INDIVIDUAL PERSON

AUDIOVIDEO PERSONNEL



Assumption of the Risk and Waiver of Liability Relating to Coronavirus/COVID-19

The novel corona virus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). COVID-19 is extremely contagious and is believed to spread mainly from person-to-person contact. As a result, federal, state, and local governments along with federal and state health agencies recommend social distancing and may prohibit and or set limitations on the congregation of groups of people.

Walker Chapel United Methodist Church (hereinafter also abbreviated as “WCUMC”), following guidelines from the Virginia United Methodist Conference, has have put in place preventive measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19; however, WCUMC cannot guarantee that any attendees participating in any service or event will not become infected with COVID-19.

Any attendee of any in-person event will have to submit a COVID Health Acknowledgement Form to attend an in-person event at WCUMC and will have to provide a signed copy of this release as well on arrival.

By signing this agreement, I acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assume the risk that I may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19 by attending the event and that such exposure or infection may result in personal injury, illness, permanent disability, and death. I voluntarily agree to assume all the foregoing risks and accept sole responsibility for any injury to myself including but not limited to personal injury, disability, illness and death as well as any damage, loss, claim, liability, or expense of any kind.

I hereby release, covenant not to sue, discharge, and hold harmless Walker Chapel United Methodist Church, its employees, agents, volunteers, local and state jurisdictions, their representatives and representatives, of and from Claims, including all liabilities, actions, damages, costs or expenses of any kind arising out of or relating thereto. I understand and agree that this release includes any Claims based on the actions, omissions, or negligence of WCUMC, its employees, agents, volunteers, and representatives, whether a COVID-19 infection occurs before, during or after presence or participation in any WCUMC event and or associated activity.

Signature

Printed Name

(If signing above as a guardian, add Child’s name below)

On behalf of my child, under the age of 18 years old, I hereby release, covenant not to sue, discharge, and hold harmless Walker Chapel United Methodist Church, its employees, agents and representatives, of and from the Claims, including all liabilities, claims, actions, damages, costs or expenses of any kind arising out of or relating thereto. I understand and agree that this release includes any Claims based on the actions, omissions, or negligence of WCUMC, its employees, agents, volunteers and representatives, whether a COVID-19 infection occurs before, during or after participation in any WCUMC event and or activity.

(Child’s Name, if signing as Guardian of child, under the age of 18 years old)