



POLICY REVISION HISTORY

Adopted 12/14/2011. Revised 02/13/13. Revised 1/13/16.

BACKGROUND/PURPOSE

The Inclement Weather Closing Policy establishes decision-making responsibility and authority and the responsibility for ensuring proper communication to the congregation and the community at large when the church is closed either for Sunday Services or for meetings and events on weekends, holidays, and during the week.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, *freezing precipitation* is defined as **sleet, freezing rain, ice, or snow that accumulates on roads**. Snow that accumulates only on grassy surfaces, rooftops, and other nonpaved surfaces is not considered a criterion for closure under this policy unless the minister, in consultation with the Grounds chair or other appropriate individuals, believes that closure is beneficial.

POLICY

1. In case of inclement weather, the Minister has the responsibility and the authority to decide whether the church will close, subject to the limits stated in this Policy.
2. A decision to close applies to all events that otherwise would be held on church premises, including outside rental events, as well as to church-sponsored events held off-premises but within the area affected by the inclement weather.
3. On Sundays, the Minister will decide by 7:00 AM whether to cancel the 9:15 service and will decide by 9:00 AM whether to cancel the 11:00 AM service.
 - a. A service will be cancelled if the hourly forecast on www.weather.com calls for a **50% or greater chance** of freezing precipitation 2 hours prior to or during the service.
 - b. In the event the forecast is for a less than a 50% chance of freezing precipitation, the Minister will decide whether to cancel a Sunday service after consultation with Hopewell Township Police, our snow removal contractor, and/or other authorities as appropriate about road conditions.
4. On Saturdays or holidays, the timing of this decision depends on the activities that are scheduled. If possible, a decision to close will be made at least 4 hours before a scheduled activity. The criterion is the same as on Sunday morning; if the hourly forecast on www.weather.com calls for a 50% or greater chance of freezing precipitation prior to an event, the Minister will close the church.
5. On weekdays, the Minister, in consultation with the Office Administrator, decides whether to close the church facility for all or part of the day. If possible, a decision to close will be made at least four hours before a scheduled activity (ideally, by the time the office closes if earlier than four hours before afternoon or evening activities). A



determination to close on weekdays will be governed, in part, by monitoring the activities of local schools to determine their opening, closing, or delay status.

6. In making the decision whether to close, the Minister is expected to consult as appropriate with other paid and volunteer staff, including the Office Administrator, Director of Lifespan Religious Education (DLRE), the Adult RE (ARE) Coordinator, Music Director, the Sexton, and/or the Grounds Chair.
7. The Minister may delegate his or her authority under this policy if the Minister will be unavailable. With the Minister's consent, any other person who has responsibility under this policy may delegate that responsibility to another person.
8. If the church is closed, no group will be permitted to meet on the premises during the closure period.
9. If the weather is inclement but the church remains open, the leader of a group scheduled to meet on the premises on a weekday is permitted to cancel the meeting but if possible will notify the Office Administrator before the close of office hours and if not possible must notify members individually. If the cancelled meeting is on a weekend, the group leader (or delegate) must notify members individually.
10. If weather conditions deteriorate after a decision is made to remain open, the minister has the authority to close the church on short notice.
11. Once a decision to close is made, the decision stands regardless of improvement in weather conditions.
12. The Minister has the responsibility and authority to establish written procedures, in cooperation with the Communications Ministry, to implement this policy and to ensure that a decision to close will be communicated effectively within the church community and to the larger community. Procedures must establish (a) a process for decision-making that clearly states the tasks of those with responsibility under this Policy and (b) how the congregation will be notified of closures.
13. The Minister is accountable to the Board for the effective implementation of this policy.

GUIDELINES

- (a) Under this policy, a decision to close is the Minister's responsibility. Nonetheless, the Minister is expected to consult other staff and church leaders as appropriate (especially when the decision is difficult, either because of uncertainty of the weather or the nature of scheduled activities).
- (b) This policy sets an objective criterion for closure of the church on a Saturday or Sunday: A 50% or greater chance of freezing precipitation, as reported on www.weather.com. In general, subjective decisions to close the church facility when a less-than-50% chance of inclement weather exists should take into account current road conditions and the weather forecast for the time period through the anticipated end of church services and activities scheduled for the day. Additionally, in the event of snow, consideration is given to the availability and timing of snow removal.



- (c) If weather is inclement on a day when a major church event is scheduled (for example, a congregational meeting, a memorial service, or fundraising event), consultation with volunteer leadership is especially important.
- (d) The primary consideration in a decision whether to close must be the safety of members, friends, and visitors who participate in church events.