

I am so excited to write this letter to you. Beginning this Sunday, August 16, we will begin worshipping again in the sanctuary. It will still be a little different as we take appropriate steps to provide the safest environment for the Body of Christ to worship together. However, we will be able to experience the fellowship and community we have been missing for so long. On behalf of the church staff and leadership, I want to extend my immense thanksgiving for your faithfulness and steadfastness over the past few months as we have dealt with this global pandemic. We deeply appreciate your patience as we have been working hard to address the spiritual and physical needs of our congregation amidst all the challenges.

Our Church Re-engagement Task Force has worked hard to put together guidelines, informed by the recommendations of local doctors who are members of FPC, to provide the safest environment for the church to worship together. This plan for moving forward was unanimously approved by our Session at our August meeting and we are excited to share the news with you.

**We will begin meeting for corporate worship on August 16 at 10:45 a.m.** We will be limiting the capacity of the sanctuary to 125 people. However, if we meet that number, we are providing an additional 25 seats in the Fellowship Hall for overflow. This means up to 150 people (including staff, ushers, and musicians) will be able to worship together. **\* A fully staffed nursery will be provided for children from birth to 3-years old.**

**Sunday School classes will be allowed to begin meeting the following Sunday, August 23.** However, some of the adult classes may not be able to observe safe social distances in their meeting spaces and will make other arrangements. Please contact your class leader to find out what the plan will be for your particular class. One change to the Sunday morning schedule will be that initially, ALL Sunday School classes will only be meeting from 10:00-10:30 a.m. The purpose of this is to limit the amount of time we are in close proximity to each other. This will be evaluated every few weeks and will be adjusted to the regular start time of 9:30 when appropriate. **We will kick this off with Rally Day in the sanctuary at 10:00 a.m. on August 23, 2020.**

Additionally, please read the following guidelines and safety protocols carefully. We are asking you to be committed to the following in order to protect our congregation's health while also providing weekly opportunities to commune with God in worship as the Body of Christ.

- All are welcome to attend the worship service. It is recommended by the CDC that members over the age of sixty-five (65) and those who are immune compromised remain at home. For those not able to attend, we will still be providing a live stream of the worship service.
- Any member who at any point in the last fourteen (14) days thinks they have come in contact with the virus or has experienced symptoms (especially a fever), should stay home out of abundance of caution.
- Temperature screenings will be done for all those before entering the building. Anyone with a temperature above 100.4 F will not be permitted to enter.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be located at each entrance, and in every bathroom, please use them.
- All attendees ages 6 and above are asked to wear a mask while inside the buildings.
- In the sanctuary, every other pew will be closed and family units should sit together and observe social distancing of at least 6 feet between families in the pews.
- Please do not congregate in the aisles or the common areas inside the building. We encourage the congregation to socialize outside the building. Also, please refrain from any type of physical greeting.
- Due to concerns surrounding the spread of the virus, there will be no corporate hymns during the service. We will still have excellent music offered to the Lord by various individuals and ensembles. We encourage you to participate with open ears, meditation, contemplating the words, or clapping if you like. This may be strange for us, but we have made it work over the past several weeks and will continue to do so.
- Liturgy Bulletins will be provided in each pew. They will also be made available on the website and in the Friday email. All attendees can use their hand-held device or print a bulletin at home.
- Offering plates will not be passed during the service; baskets will be provided by the doors for tithes/offerings to be placed into; online giving and automatic drafts will still be available
- There will be no breakfast or coffee until further notice. *B.Y.O.C. (Bring Your Own Coffee)*

In addition, the outside gathering spaces on the church campus are all open. There will be signage placed at the Pavilion, Farmer's Market, Playground, and Kids House patio encouraging safe social distance practices.

Thank you for your attention to these details. We appreciate your partnership in working to implement these standards.

I look forward to seeing you soon!

Grace & Peace to you,

Rev. Waring Porter