



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It has been awhile since we have been able to see each other in person and I know that has been difficult for most, if not all of us. Know that I miss worshipping together in-person and serving alongside each one of you.

I am writing, on behalf of the Session, to let you know that Session met on May 26th to discuss when and how to return to in-person worship. After much discussion and prayer, we have decided that June 14th is our *tentative* date for returning to in-person worship. I say *tentative* because we will continue to monitor the data and science on the Covid-19 pandemic, and Session might push that back if the numbers grow. We also want to ensure that our technology is working properly so we can continue to live stream services for those who may not feel comfortable returning yet.

With these decisions, there will be some changes as to how we worship in-person and with our live stream, and how we care for each other and the most vulnerable among us. For those who are ready to join us for in-person worship, *we are recommending that everyone wear a mask*. We are asking you to wear masks to reduce the risk of potential transmission. We do not wear masks because we are concerned about ourselves but to protect and love others. I can't think of a more faithful Christian thing to do than to wear a mask to protect others. Christ talked about how true love was to lay down our lives for one another. Now, wearing a mask is not laying our lives down for each other, but it does show our love and concern for those with us.

*We are also asking everyone to come and go from the building through the alley way doors only*. This is for two reasons: first, to have a one way flow of traffic in and out of the sanctuary, and secondly, because we are having a little bit of work done at the front door and there may be some equipment that will be in the way.

When you come into sanctuary you will notice that there will be pews marked off, so we can maintain a safe social distance. When you come in, the Head Elder will also suggest a place to sit, to help maintain the minimum of 6 feet of distance. We are asking one family unit per pew, and to be flexible since you might not be able to sit in your usual spots.

Another change will be in how we worship for the time being. Because of how the virus spreads, there will be no singing, no Passing of the Peace, no Children's Sermon (or worship activity bags) and no Offering plates to pass. If you are like me, you are missing music like crazy, so it is a slight relief to know that we will have music, we just will not be singing. A box to drop off offerings will be available in the hallway by the elevator. There will also be no Coffee Fellowship after worship or Nursery available, to continue to limiting contact.

As for the technological way to participate in worship, when we return to in-person services, it will no longer take place using Zoom. Instead, we will live stream our services, which means that a link will be available to watch the service as it is happening so anyone can join in our service, from wherever they are. As always, the service will continue to be recorded and posted in various places. We will have more information on the specifics of how to find our live stream link soon.

Finally, we are still recommending that those who are the most vulnerable and at high-risk, who have preexisting conditions, or are over the age of 70, continue to worship digitally.

We are grateful for all your prayers and understanding in this time. We believe that as we continue to take the necessary precautions to take care of one another, it will ensure that all of us will be together when it is safe to return with a full service and gathered church family. I know these precautions and recommendations are not ideal, but we do feel they are the best way to keep one another safe in this time. The reality is that things may never go back to the way they were, but this might very well be the chance for us, as a church and community, to respond in new ways, while maybe resetting some things in all our lives that were potentially holding us back from fully living into the Gospel.

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev. Dan Jessop". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

Rev. Dan Jessop and the Session of First Presbyterian Church