



First United Methodist Church

618 Eighth Street

Columbus, IN 47201

Phone: 812-372-2851

www.fumccolumbus.org

Facebook: Columbus First United Methodist Church

June 5, 2020

Dear Friends,

Since mid-March we have been offering our morning worship services through livestreaming. I want to thank you for your patience, adaptability and the generous ways you have accepted these changes. Your willingness to embrace these changes has been vital in our efforts to maintain the safety and health of all within our community. In this letter we want to detail the next phase of our activities together as we slowly begin to re-open services and activities.

Sunday Worship

Beginning on Sunday June 14th, we are going to begin offering an in-person option for Sunday morning worship. This service will be based upon best practices for social gatherings. The service will begin at 8:30 a.m. and last about 30-35 minutes. All participants will be seated on the main level (no balcony) and with recommended social distancing. The service will be primarily spoken with scripture readings, prayers and a sermon. We will offer a prelude and postlude, but we will not sing together. It has been pointed out that singing is a “super spreader” meaning that the transmission of the virus is increased through singing. For the time being, we will forgo all congregation and choral singing at the in-person service. While much of the service might be defined by what is not present (no hymns, no children’s moment or childcare, no doxology or passing the peace) the worship planning team is working to design services that are meaningful and inspiring.

For those who choose to attend this service, the entry into the service will be through the narthex doors on 8th Street or the Lafayette Street doors only. These doors will be opened at 8:00 a.m. Hand sanitizer will be available at each of the entrances. All attendees must wear masks from the time of entry until they depart. For anyone without a mask, we will have them available at the entrances. During this phase of re-opening we will not be offering coffee time or Sunday School classes.

We ask that you attend only if you are feeling well. We are asking the same of all staff and volunteers, to only attend when feeling well.

For those seeking to be baptized or needing other services during this time, please contact the pastoral staff in advance and arrangements can be made.

As we offer this in-person worship opportunity, we want to stress that **we will continue to offer the 10:00 a.m. Sunday morning livestream service.** We believe this is the safest means for offering worship at this time and will continue to do so. If you haven’t viewed these live services, we invite you to do so and share your comments with one another via Facebook. If you need assistance connecting to the livestream, please do not hesitate to contact the church office and we would be glad to help in any way we can. After the services



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are completed, they can also be viewed anytime on the church website (www.fumccolumbus.org.)

Church Offices

Beginning on Monday June 15th, we will re-open the church offices on a limited basis. For the time being, **the office will be open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9 a.m.-noon.** We recommend you call ahead to make sure the person you are wishing to see is present that day. If you need to see one of our staff members or need something from the office but cannot come during those hours, please call and make an appointment and arrangements will be made. **As with Sunday morning, staff members will be wearing masks throughout the building and we require that all visitors do the same.**

Church Groups and Committees

If your group would like to meet in the church, we ask that you call the church office to schedule the time and date. This will be a great help to our custodial staff. We are designating three areas for meetings: Room 116 (located near the Lafayette Street doors by the Coke machine), the Fellowship Hall (near the patio) and the Music room (for bell practice). Please wear a mask as you enter the building. Once in your designated room, groups will have the discretion of continuing to wear the masks or removing them while together. Please ask your members what they prefer and be respectful of people's varying levels of comfort.

We are pleased to be able to begin this first phase or re-opening in our worship, offices and gatherings. We will continue to monitor the changing events and make adjustments as needed.

Thank you for your continued patience and understanding.

Sincerely,

Howard E. Boles

