



## First United Methodist Church

135 West Simpson Street  
Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania 17055  
(717) 766-4611  
[www.fumchurch.com](http://www.fumchurch.com)  
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July 17, 2020

Dear First Church Family,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I am writing to announce that on **Sunday, July 26, at 8:30 a.m.** we re-gather for worship in the church sanctuary! We have reviewed the current data on the number of COVID cases in our specific region and have prepared a very safe plan for re-gathering that we feel confident will address the concerns and requirements communicated in the Governor's order dated July 15. As long as the number of COVID-19 cases in our region remains at a safe level, we will proceed with caution in holding one service at 8:30 a.m. each Sunday, at least through the month of August.

As some of our congregation re-gathers, we will still offer our services online. Those who worship from home will have the same service as those who worship in-person. You will access this online service the same way you have been (available on YouTube through our website or our Facebook page), but will need to wait until 8:30 am or any time after to view it.

8:30 am was chosen for our one in-person worship service to provide time for Sunday School classes to meet from 10:00 - 11:00 am. Additionally, this allows those who wish to worship online at an earlier time to do so, while also allowing online worship at any time later than 8:30 am. We will continue to offer a blend of the two worship styles we usually offer until we are able to return to multiple services.

To ensure everyone's health and safety, we will practice the following guidelines as we take **our first steps** to re-gather:

- If you plan to attend worship, we ask that you **pre-register by noon on Thursday** of each week (registration begins Monday, July 20, and ends at 12:00 p.m. Thursday, July 23, for the first service ). Please go to the church website, [www.fumchurch.com](http://www.fumchurch.com), and follow the directions for registration or call the church office, **717-766-4611**, to register if you are unable to do so online. If you do not pre-register, you may still attend, but pre-registering will greatly assist our staff and hospitality team as we prepare to welcome you.
- Please **arrive no more than 15 minutes before the start of the service**. When you arrive, there will be **designated entrances**. If you use the office entrance (which is handicap accessible), you will proceed down the office hallway and straight into the sanctuary. If you use the alley entrance, you will come up the steps and directly into the green chair section of the sanctuary. Our **red coat greeters will be there** to guide you and help you check-in. All other entrances will be closed at this time.
- To ensure safe physical distancing, **ushers will seat you**. Members of the same household will be asked to remain together. Childcare will not be provided. We ask that **children remain with their parents**. This means you may have to sit in a seat that is new to you. Thank you for your flexibility in viewing this as an opportunity to shift your perspective and see our beautiful sanctuary in a new light!
- We ask that everyone **wear a mask** the whole time you are in the building. If you do not have a mask, one will be provided. A number of **hand sanitizing stations** will be available for you at the entrance, the hospitality stations and in the sanctuary. For now, mailboxes, water fountains, and other areas of the church will not be open. Should you need a restroom, two are available: One in the office hallway on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and one in the children's department hallway on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor.
- Even though the service may be a bit different, **God's Word will still be proclaimed and we will still offer our prayers and praises to God!** To avoid the spread of the virus, there will be no congregational singing. We will also avoid handshaking, hugs, etc. And, rather than passing offering plates, there will be baskets at the doors for our offerings.

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*Opening Doors with Christ, One Another and Our Neighbors*



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- When worship is over, we will ask that you ***remain in your seats until directed*** by an usher to leave and to exit the building. Of course, you may linger outside in the parking lot for as long as you would like!

This past Sunday, July 12, while most of our congregation worshiped online, 56 members of our Reopening Task Force, pastors, staff and families, did an in-person worship "***test run.***" We followed all of the guidelines listed above. Everything went exceptionally well! We look forward to re-gathering on July 26 with those who are ready. We're also thankful that those for whom it is best to stay home can still be together in worship online.

Given the uncertainty of the times in which we live, we will continue planning one step at a time, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. ***We will keep you informed*** about what we are doing, why we are doing it, and how you can be involved.

***I am so very grateful for you!*** Because of your faithfulness, our church has remained alive and active, even though our building has been closed. Please continue to join me in prayer, trusting that God is already at work and is able to accomplish far beyond all we can ask or imagine!

Rejoice in the Lord, always!

Pastor Denny