

The First Presbyterian Church  
1324 Marion Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

May 7, 2020

Dear Members of First Presbyterian Church,

I wanted to provide an update, especially as it relates to “re-entry,” as we continue to deal with the impacts brought on by COVID-19. Obviously one of the biggest impacts incurred is not being able to worship together. We all long for the time that we can gather again as a church family for worship. The Worship, Music and Sacraments (WM&S) Committee of Session has been and continues to study this. Their primary focus currently is on the “how” and not the “when.” The WM&S Committee, in conjunction with the COVID-19 Commission within our church, will be bringing recommendations to Session at the appropriate time. All re-entry decisions will be made by Session.

As previously stated, we all strongly desire to return to worship but, at this time, there has been no specific date set. We are very cognizant that there are varying opinions related to this pandemic and the potential risk associated with re-entry. Regardless, we know that whenever we assemble again, it will include some form of social distancing and other precautions. There are inherent logistical issues for churches with larger congregations such as ours. The biggest challenges that confront us are capacity associated with social distancing and sanitation. One potential way to address capacity is to offer more services, which is being considered. However, we will be required to sanitize facilities in between services.

There are numerous other complexities associated with re-entry, and our church leadership is also investigating a multitude of options. Our decisions will be heavily influenced by the guidelines provided by both our state and local authorities. We have engaged directly with governmental officials and will continue to do so. I want to assure everyone that this is our primary focus, but we want to proceed in a manner that is safe and feasible. Let me add that our leadership is also looking at re-entry for our church staff to be able to return to campus. Our staff has done an incredible job adapting and creating ways to continue to minister to our congregation.

Although we have not been able to worship together, you will be very pleased to know that the LORD is blessing us in and through the Live Stream of our Sunday services. It continues to grow as we are averaging almost 2,400 live stream sessions each Sunday, with additional views later. We are receiving notes, emails, and other communications of gratitude and encouragement on a weekly basis, not only from our own congregation, but from people all over the world. The daily devotionals being conducted by Dr. Thomas also continue to grow in viewership.

Please know that your church leadership loves you and misses you, and if you have any need, please contact a church officer or one of our church staff. We also solicit your prayers as we continue to study the process of re-entry and other decisions that confront us moving forward.

In Christ's love,



Lee Harvin  
Chairman, Administration Committee