#### First Presbyterian Church

#### 622 Stratton Street, Logan, WV 25601

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June 3, 2020

Dear FPC Family,

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ! Our session met on Met and have tentatively scheduled a return to in person worship on June 7, 2020. We will meet again on June 1st to confirm or postpone that date. We have decided to postpone a little longer to observe if infection rates have increased from Memorial Day weekend travel. We will meet again on June 15th to determine if we are ready. We will most likely open if numbers stay the same or reduce. We are relying on guidance from our public health authorities and the Presbytery of West Virginia. A return to worship will not look like we have been used to. Here are some highlights of the attached plan:

All worshippers will be required to wear masks, if you do not have one, one will be provided.

Physical distancing will be enforced, seating will be in every other pew, pews will be marked off. You can sit in family units, otherwise, please space at least 6 feet apart.

Please do not arrive early or congregate in the narthex. I will dismiss people by row when the service is over. Please proceed directly to the parking lot after and do not congregate.

Offering plates will be on a table to place your gifts in on your way out of the church.

The governor’s recommendation is if you are over 65 or have other health concerns to please stay home at this time. Online worship will still be available at fpclogan.org. A return to worship in person is a personal decision. There will be no expectations of attendance or anything like that. Please decide for your own sense of safety.

Hymns will not be sung. According to guidelines, singing poses a great risk because of airborne droplets that may spread much further than normal conversation.

Friends, I know this is a scary time, but we also must return to some sense of normalcy. I look forward to seeing you in person, but yet will not be able to hug or shake hands. Be sure that God is with us in this time and that as a session and staff we will do our very best to maintain safety. Please email or call me with any feedback in regards to our reopening plan.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Kevin Geurink

**First Presbyterian Church of Logan, WV**

**Church Reopening Plan**

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Logan, WV voted to suspend Morning Worship beginning with the March 15, 2020 service in response to the COVID19 pandemic. The Session’s response was part of a state and nationwide effort to reduce the rate of infection while protecting our congregation from the potential spread of the disease. Since that time the rate of infection has reduced and continues to maintain below a 3% rate of new infections per ongoing testing within West Virginia. As a result, medical experts advising the governor have recommended that Churches in West Virginia be allowed to reopen for worship in a manner that is safe so as to minimize infection exposure to its congregations.

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Logan, WV submits the following plan as a guideline for reopening our Church. The guideline is driven by our faith in Almighty God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit to inspire our trust and eliminate our fears in resuming our privilege to worship together in His house. We trust that God has inspired in medical experts the knowledge to manage the COVID19 plague, develop effective treatment, and subsequently produce a vaccine that will eventually render the world safe for corporate worship as we have experienced before the pandemic.

Even though the infection rate of West Virginia is low, precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of all members of the congregation. Thus far, medical experts have learned that COVID19 is very contagious. The disease attacks people over sixty five (65) years of age and/or those with obesity, diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, among other health issues more severely than those outside of that category. We know that a significant percentage of the congregation at the First Presbyterian Church of Logan is over sixty five (65). Specific health issues of others is unknown. Those falling into the at risk category would be advised to seek the advice of their health care provider before deciding on whether to return to a public gathering including Church. It is with this understanding that the Session believes that some members of the congregation will not feel comfortable coming back within the sanctuary at the present while others want to resume their worship practices at the Church. A means to facilitate all is to continue with the online worship while at the same time opening the sanctuary for those who want to worship there.

The following Reopening Plan is a guideline based on current information. It will be amended as needed to include practices and procedures as new information becomes available. Upon amendment of the plan, a revised copy will be sent to each member of the congregation. The plan is divided into three (3) phases. Each phase corresponds to a significant development toward the disease’s eradication. With each phase, risks associated with contracting infection and experiencing severe illness are minimized. Each phase is listed as follows:

PHASE 1 – Current situation.

PHASE 2 - Development and medical practice of effective treatment.

PHASE 3 – Development and public administering of a vaccine.

As the plan progresses from one phase to the next, the minister will inform the congregation of the date of the upcoming change.

**PHASE 1**

* Send a copy of the plan to the congregation with a cover letter from the minister informing all when the plan will start.
* Open the Church building to worship and required daily business only. Other regular events will not be scheduled at the present such as Sunday School, outside meetings, practices, dinners, etc. Any other unforeseen activity would have to be voted upon by the session.
* Online worship would continue for those electing that form of worship.
* The ushers should open the front door prior to worship and latch it open to minimize touching the door handle.
* Place wet wipes next to objects people have to touch such as bathroom doors, side entrance, and sanctuary entrance. Place hand sanitizer at the entrance to the sanctuary.
* Place “occupied/open” signs on bathroom doors to prevent from more than one person entering.
* Request that the congregation separate within the sanctuary as much as possible for social distancing. Families would be allowed to sit next to one another. Encourage everyone to sit in the same seats at future worship services. By sitting in the same seats, each person could wipe hymnals and areas that they may have touched during the worship.
* Close off the first several rows of the sanctuary to provide for twenty seven (27) feet minimum between the pulpit and the first occupied pew.
* Music shall be provided by the choir director as is the current practice with the online worship. Members of the congregation would be encouraged to follow by singing lightly or reading the song.
* When serving Communion, the congregation shall bring their own elements.
* The congregation shall not pass offering trays. Ushers will hold the tray and allow individuals to place their offering, without touching the tray.
* Encourage the congregation to wear masks when entering and leaving the Church or any other situation that could invade social distancing. Once separated in pews within the sanctuary, masks may be removed. The minister shall wear a mask when greeting the congregation after the worship service. Social distancing shall be maintained in greeting.
* At the conclusion of worship and exiting of the congregation, ushers will wipe down areas where people may have touched such as door knobs and pew rails.
* Those who feel ill would be encouraged to participate in the online worship service instead of attending in the sanctuary.
* Should anyone travel to an area of higher infection rate, they should participate in the scheduled online worship service for fourteen (14) days after return.

**PHASE 2**

* The minister will inform the congregation when Phase 2 of the plan will start.
* The Church would be open for Morning Worship, Sunday School, Church related meetings, choir and daily business. Any other activity would have to be voted upon by the session.
* Online worship would continue for those electing that form of worship, if required.
* The ushers should open the front door prior worship and latch it open to minimize touching the door handle.
* Place wet wipes next to objects people have to touch such as bathroom doors, side entrance, and sanctuary entrance. Place hand sanitizer at the entrance to the sanctuary.
* Place “occupied/open” signs on bathroom doors to prevent from more than one person entering.
* Request that the congregation separate within the sanctuary as much as possible for social distancing. Families would be allowed to sit next to one another. Encourage everyone to sit in the same seats at future worship services. By sitting in the same seats, each person could wipe hymnals and areas that they may have touched during the worship.
* Close off the first several rows of the sanctuary to provide for twenty seven (27) feet minimum between the pulpit and the first occupied pew.
* The choir shall resume singing but spread out more for social distancing. Members of the congregation would be encouraged to sing if proper social distancing can be maintained.
* When serving Communion, the congregation shall bring their own elements.
* The congregation shall not pass offering trays. Ushers will hold the tray and allow individuals to place their offering, without touching the tray.
* Wearing a mask would be the prerogative of each individual.
* At the conclusion of worship and exiting of the congregation, ushers will wipe down areas where people may have touched such as door knobs and pew rails.
* Those who feel ill would be encouraged to participate in the online worship service instead of attending in the sanctuary.
* Should anyone travel to an area of higher infection rate, they should participate in the scheduled online worship service for fourteen (14) days after return.

**PHASE 3**

* The minister will inform the congregation when Phase 3 of the plan will start.
* The Church would be open for all activities that were normally scheduled prior to the COVID19 pandemic.
* Online worship would be evaluated for continuance.
* Place wet wipes next to objects people have to touch such as bathroom doors, side entrance, and sanctuary entrance. Place hand sanitizer at the entrance to the sanctuary.
* Place “occupied/open” signs on bathroom doors to prevent from more than one person entering.
* Everyone within the sanctuary would be free to sit where they please.
* Traditional Communion Services would resume.
* Traditional offering practices would resume.
* Traditional ushering duties would resume.