



May 7, 2020

Dear Church Member,

Warmest greetings from First Presbyterian.

Over the last few weeks we have been actively involved in a number of meetings and conference calls with national political and religious leaders, state officials, civic leaders, medical professionals, and senior representatives of many of the downtown churches. Each of these meetings has been both productive and informative as we have considered the guidelines that need to be put in place in order to open churches for worship.

On Wednesday, the 29th of April, a telecast for religious leaders in the state was joined by Governor McMaster. During this time he emphasized that “there are no restrictions” for churches in South Carolina who wish to meet, and he highlighted the protection we have under the First Amendment. He did, however, stress that when churches do open, we should seek to follow medical advice and encourage the most vulnerable members of the congregation to remain at home for the time being. He also strongly encouraged those in attendance to follow the strict social distancing protocols currently in place.

On Wednesday evening, the 6th of May, the Session met to consider the protocols and guidelines we would need to put in place if we were to open for worship. After significant discussion and prayerful consideration, the Session voted to begin having services at 8:00am, 9:30am, and 11:00am on Sunday, the 17th of May.

I have included with this letter a copy of the guidelines that will be in place and ask that you and your family familiarize yourselves with them. These guidelines are multi-layered and will impact each generation of worshippers.

In compiling these guidelines, the health of the congregation has been uppermost in our minds, and we have sought to follow advice from the Centers of Disease Control and local medical professionals. Bear in mind that if there is a significant increase in reported cases of COVID-19 in the Greenville area, we will cancel the services planned for the 17th of May.

We would be most grateful for your prayers and patient cooperation as we begin to open the church for worship. The social distancing protocols and healthcare guidelines may need to remain in place for several weeks. If you would feel uncomfortable attending worship, please continue to be both careful and prayerful while remaining at home.

Finally, allow me to thank so many of you for joining us through our streaming services each Sunday morning. These services will continue.

We continue to be grateful to God for you. Please be prayerful, careful, and patient with us as we plan and prepare for the weeks ahead, and I look forward to welcoming you on Sunday, the 17th of May.

Yours in Him,

Rev. Dr. Richard Gibbons, Senior Pastor