



# First Presbyterian Church of Dunellen

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August 19, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters at FPC Dunellen:

I am excited to announce that the session plans to reopen the sanctuary for worship on **September 13, 2020**. The Session has been praying and planning how to safely, obediently and effectively reopen the sanctuary since May. It took several months to create a plan that fit all 3 services, met the needs of our diverse congregation, and made the best use of our beautiful, but old and narrow building. We are now implementing that plan, working hard to upgrade the audiovisual system and preparing the sanctuary for reopening. We thank you so much for your patience, prayers and support during this process.

In order to have enough time for health screening and intensive cleaning between each service, our worship times will be changing. When worship reopens on September 13th **attenders will need to come 30 minutes early for health screening**. Here are the new service times along with the time you need to arrive for health screening:

<u>TRADITIONAL SERVICE</u>	<u>FUSION CONTEMPORARY SERVICE</u>	<u>SPANISH WORSHIP SERVICE</u>
8:30 am - Arrive for Screening	11:15 am - Arrive for Screening	2:00 pm - Arrive for Screening
9 am - Worship Service Starts	11:45 am - Worship Service Starts	2:30 pm - Worship Service Starts

**The new Worship Service times will begin on August 30<sup>th</sup>** when our volunteer attend to practice their roles for the first time in Worship. We will need many volunteers each Sunday. There will be many ways for you to serve each Sunday as ushers, screeners, cleaners and audiovisual volunteers. We will be sending you more information about how to serve, how to register for services and how to attend very soon.

Due to state restrictions for safe indoor meetings a *maximum of 38 people* will be allowed in our building at one time. This includes adults, children, volunteers, staff and pastors. Unfortunately, not everyone will be able to come every Sunday. Others will need to make the hard decision to stay home for health reasons. To serve all those who cannot attend in person, we will continue to stream all three worship services live on Facebook and by phone on Zoom. We will also begin live streaming to our website ([dunellenpres.org](http://dunellenpres.org)) in the next few weeks.

It's not only the number of people allowed in the Sanctuary that will be different than it was before Covid19. We will have to remain 6 feet apart, sit only with those we live with, register for services, be

screened upon entry, be seated in the next available seating area and wear masks from when we arrive for health screening until our row is dismissed (up to 2 hours). There will be no childcare, no offering plates, no bulletins, no dancers, no flags, no shofar, no fellowship hour, no food, no hugs, no kisses and no handshakes. That's a lot of change.

For some these changes will be comforting as it will be clear that our priority is everyone's safety. For others, the changes will be upsetting and frustrating since we cannot worship the same way as always. We understand, because many of us feel the same way. In this time of pandemic, these are the things we must do in order to love each other as Jesus has loved us. As the Apostle Paul says: "*You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.*" (Galatians 4:13) We are willingly using our freedom in Christ to joyfully self-limit ourselves so that we can lovingly serve each other.

As you think about these changes, remember that the important things remain the same. Jesus is Lord and He is good. Every Sunday we will be singing together, praying together, hearing God's word together and celebrating His goodness together in the sanctuary where God has been praised for *150 years*. Many others will be joining us in worship by watching online or listening on the phone. It will be different, difficult and new, but no matter how we gather, our church is still part of the Body of Christ, sons and daughters of the King, and a place of hope in the middle of New Jersey. May the Lord be blessed by our love for Him and for one another.

If you have any questions, need prayer or would like to talk with me please contact me by email or by calling the church office. Thank you for praying for the session and staff, for your encouragement, support and patience. It means a lot to us. I look forward to seeing you in September. God bless you all.

In Christ,



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**Rev. Tim Osborne**  
*Pastor (Head of Staff)*