

April 30, 2021

Dear Bethlehem Community –

Bethlehem's Re-Opening Team has been hard at work since last summer, providing guidance for safe ways for the Bethlehem community to gather. Over the last month, in response to new direction provided by the Centers for Disease Control, our team has finalized plans to **resume a simple, limited-capacity, in-person, spoken-word liturgy beginning Sunday, May 9 at 10 am!** In order for this service to happen safely we will adhere to the following guidelines.

- To accommodate capacity limits in our sanctuary, **reservations will be required for each service.** You may [reserve space here](#) (the link is also available on BLC's [Share in Worship page](#)). We are committed to providing access to worship for all who wish to gather. Please contact the church office, if you need assistance making a reservation or cannot access this website.
- **Masks will be required at all times in the building, except for children under the age of 2.**
- To assist households who have little ones who cannot mask, there will be designated space in the sanctuary for strollers and carriers.
- **We will practice six feet of physical distance between households.** To allow for this, a limited number of pews will be available in the sanctuary.
- Worshippers may be assigned specific seating within the sanctuary or narthex to optimize our capacity.
- In-person worship will include instrumental music and spoken liturgy, but not singing. To begin, we will celebrate Holy Communion on the first Sunday of the month. We plan to increase the frequency of communion as we adapt to this new environment.
- Worshipers will be required to mark their presence in worship so that we can comply with health department requirements regarding contact tracing.
- If we find ourselves reaching capacity, we will seek ways to expand opportunities to participate.
- Capacity for in-person worship may be reduced or suspended if disease conditions warrant. BLC Officers will continue to monitor local and state health department guidance and will communicate with the congregation.
- The in-person worship service will not be recorded or live-streamed.

We know that there is a portion of the Bethlehem community that is not comfortable with indoor gatherings at this time. **We will continue our Sunday morning livestream in its current form at 8:30 am on Sunday mornings.**



In addition to planning for the return of in-person worship, our Re-Opening team has revised the guidance for BLC gatherings in our building and beyond our walls. That guidance and the most up-to-date information will continue to be posted on the [Gathering Again page](#) of our website.

In order for in-person worship to happen safely and well, we need your partnership and assistance. Are you able and willing to be part of a team extending hospitality and assisting our Bethlehem community in following the new protocols and guidance that will be required for these gatherings? Sign up on the BLC Website. We have developed specific guidance and will train you ahead of time so you will know what your role and responsibilities are.

We remain grateful for the faithful leadership Bethlehem's Re-Opening Team* has provided over the last year to get us to this point. We know that as we begin to gather and become familiar again with in-person worship, we will need to make adjustments. We ask your patience and understanding as we navigate these changes in the coming weeks and months.

In Christ –



Rick Walker
Council President



The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson
Pastor



The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman
Pastor

*Re-Opening Team members are: Matt Beutel, Brian Edwards, Margie Gaul, Kristina Henry, Julie Owen, Bob Stolze, Rick Walker, Pastor Amy