



926 11th Street NW, Washington, DC 20001-4488
Tel: 202-628-0009 | Fax: 202-783-0519

July 12, 2021

Dear Asburyans,

Grace and peace to you! I am writing to further update you on our plans to regather for in-person worship and ministry activities. With the announcements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) easing mask wearing restrictions for those who are vaccinated and the District of Columbia Government allowing places of worship to gather at 100% capacity effective May 21, 2021, Asbury's Reopen Taskforce met to determine a timeline for our *gradual* safe reopening and the protocols which are to be in effect. The Reopen Taskforce also invited you to be part of the process, helping us to determine our readiness based on the percentage of our membership vaccinated as well as your readiness to return to in-person worship and the conditions under which you would return. The results of the survey were shared at our June Town Hall Meeting. We found that 96% of those who completed the survey (156 responses) indicated they are vaccinated. Further, 65% were ready to return to worship with appropriate safeguards in place.

We want to again share the timeline for our gradual safe reopening and additional details. **Mask wearing and physical distancing will continue to be practiced because our services and activities are open to all.** There remains the potential for the virus to spread among unvaccinated persons. We are respectfully requiring that all persons who lead or serve in the worship services be vaccinated. These precautions are taken out of our commitment to caring for one another as the body of Christ. Please refer to the enclosed summary chart and timeline.

Communion

Effective June 1, 2021, in-person communion is being offered on the first Sundays at 8:00 a.m. throughout the summer on the lawn. In case of inclement weather, including rain or extreme heat, the service will be held in the Fellowship Hall. Masks and physical distancing are required.

Weddings, Funerals, and Baptisms

Effective June 1, 2021, weddings, funerals, and baptisms may be held subject to mask wearing, physical distancing, and other appropriate safeguards. (Note: The ongoing interior work in the sanctuary has prevented such gatherings. That work just completed on July 9, 2021.)

Sunday Worship Services

The Homecoming Service, on September 12, 10:00 a.m., will be our official return to in-person worship. There will be a number of changes in our worship protocols including the temporary removal of hymnals, bibles, paper, and pens from the pews, use of individually packaged communion elements, mask wearing, physical distancing, directional signage, registration for contact tracing, and use of hand sanitizer upon entry. The Homecoming Service and all services going forward will be livestreamed to YouTube and Facebook.

We will be offering one Sunday morning service at 10:00 a.m. at this time due to limited human and financial resources. We will also resume live services of the Bridge at 5:00 p.m.

Music Ministry

Throughout the pandemic, the Music Ministry has adhered to the guidelines of the CDC, District of Columbia, and Baltimore-Washington Conference. To that end, we will continue to limit the number of persons in the chancel area as required for physical distancing. Singers are required to be vaccinated and will wear Singer's Masks (provided by Asbury) at rehearsals and in-person worship gatherings. The Music Ministry is still discerning the gathering of soloists and ensembles subject to safety protocols and the availability of choir members. A July meeting is being planned, which will include choir members, to determine how to best meet Asbury's needs.

Lay Visitation

Throughout the pandemic the Senior Pastor has made hospital visits in critical situations subject to limits imposed by individual hospitals. The Stephen Ministry has organized wellness calls to members. The Lay Visitation Team will resume home visits beginning August 1, 2021 after review of each individual situation. We are requiring that both the Lay Visitation member and the home bound member be vaccinated to ensure we are caring for the well-being of each other.

Sunday School, Bible Study and Small Groups

Effective August 1, 2021, Christian Education ministries are encouraged to begin re-engaging in in-person classes and small group experiences. Virtual Christian Education will continue be offered. Some in-person class offerings are expected to resume in September.

Missions and Outreach

Effective August 1, 2021, Missions and Outreach ministries are encouraged to begin re-engaging in in-person meetings and activities. Throughout the pandemic the Nehemiah Fund has been available to assist persons in need. We partnered with Martha's Table to ensure some funds continue to go toward basic food assistance in our community. The Missions and Outreach Team is still working out alternatives for offering the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Breakfast and Food Pantry such that safety protocols, specifically physical distancing may be practiced. Additionally, the Food Pantry is in need of a coordinator and volunteers. **Please contact the church office if you are willing to serve.**

Administrative Ministries

Effective August 1, 2021, Administrative ministry areas are encouraged to begin re-engaging in in-person meetings. Church Council, Finance, Trustees, and the Staff Parish Relations Committee have met virtually throughout the pandemic. These ministries have decided that the virtual format has been very effective. They will continue to meet virtually with periodic in-person meetings.



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Coffee/Fellowship Hour & Repasts

Food fellowship will continue to be suspended for medium-to-large gatherings where physical distancing and other safety protocols are not possible because of capacity limitations. Again, we are mindful that there is the potential for the virus to spread among unvaccinated persons.

Parking

Garage parking will be available beginning September 1, 2021. The new parking garage management company, Atlantic Group, has installed an automated unattended system. This impacts weekday garage access which now requires a keycard for entry or validation of the visitor's parking ticket by the church office. On weekends access will be unlimited, assisted by an attendant, and your usual hanging tag will grant you entry to the parking garage. We plan to resume Sunday Valet parking and will require that the valet be vaccinated.

Church Office Hours

Effective September 1, 2021, church office hours and facility access will be the following:

Monday-Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Saturday: 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Sunday: 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Weekday evening hours will be by request (subject to approval of the Trustees)

Thank you for your flexibility and steadfastness as we navigate these changing times together.
May God richly bless you!

Sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Dr. I. M. Mills

Rev. Dr. Ianther M. Mills
Senior Pastor

Incl: Summary Re-Gathering Chart
Back to In-person Gatherings Timeline

