

Dear DUMC Church Family,

Jesus taught that love of God and love of our neighbors are the commandments on which the foundation of our faith is built. It makes sense, then, that our worship time centers on both our relationship with God and our relationships with each other. With the realities of this global pandemic, we have found ourselves struggling to find the connections to each other that feed our souls and help us experience God's love. Through the blessings of technology, we have been able to worship God from the safety of our own homes, but we are feeling the emptiness of missed fellowship. We are eager to unite our congregation and once again enjoy the fullness of our spiritual lives.

However, as the challenges of worshipping safely together during a global pandemic persist, we must ensure that our approach is care-filled and conscientious. We cannot simply open the doors and invite all to join in worship, music, fellowship, and contact in the ways that we know. We are mindful of the dangers of that approach and the risk is too great. We care enough to change while change is needed. We understand the sacrifice we must make to protect our neighbors in this unprecedented time.

As we determined the best approach to resuming in-person worship, we took into consideration the latest requirements of the Delta County Public Health Department and the Mountain Sky United Methodist Conference. We also consulted our hazard insurance policy provided through Church Mutual. And finally, we asked what our members needed through a survey. The detailed results of this survey are available upon request, but the overwhelming majority of members said:

- They were feeling cautious, but eager to return to church if they could do so safely.
- They would feel more comfortable if everyone wore masks and if everyone had their temperatures taken.
- They would prefer the option to make a reservation for worship.

After prayerful reflection, being mindful of the vulnerability of many of our members and the charge for Christians to care for each other fiercely, the ReLaunch team has created a plan for reopening under what we believe to be the safest possible circumstances. **We plan to ReLaunch in-person worship on August 9 under a new set of safety protocols. Online worship will remain available for those who do not wish to come in person.** We also encourage everyone who is over the age of 60 or who has underlying conditions to consider continuing to worship from home for their own protection; however, we understand that this risk is one that many of our congregants will be willing to take.

We have identified the following regulations for in-person worship:

- All individuals who are at risk for spreading the COVID-19 virus **must** worship from home for the protection of others. *(This would include those who have tested positive for COVID-19, those who have been exposed to someone COVID-19 positive in the last 14 days, and those who have travelled in the last 14 days, especially to infection hotspots. This includes family visiting from out of town.)*
- No more than 50 people will be permitted in the building at a time.
- Individuals must adhere to plans to minimize movement around the building and maximize social distancing.
- Masks must be worn properly at all times for the comfort and protection of others.
- Worship may not include singing or liturgical response, and movement during worship will be minimized.

- Sanitizing must take place as individuals enter and after worship has ended.
- Individuals will be screened as they enter by having their temperatures taken and confirming that they are not high risk for transmitting COVID-19.
- Attendance and seating charts will be kept in case there is a need for contact tracing.
- HVAC will be turned off while the building is occupied to minimize spread of droplets.
- Everyone must leave immediately after worship. No fellowship time is permitted.

While we understand that worship under these circumstances will not be what we are all longing for, we hope it will fulfil some of the need for unity, fellowship, and normalcy that we have been missing. This plan is flexible and subject to change as conditions change or as we learn more of what works and what does not. We welcome the feedback as we try to make the best of a rotten situation.

This is what a typical Sunday morning will look like for the time being:

- There will be one worship service, beginning at 10 am.
- There will be room for some people to make reservations online in advance of the church service, and the remaining spots will be left open for those who did not make a reservation. If you made a reservation, please arrive by 9:55 or your spot may go to someone else who is waiting. No one else will be admitted once we reach our capacity. (*Details to come about how to make reservations*).
- You will enter the building through the fellowship hall entrance on Meeker.
- You will sanitize your hands, put on your mask, have your temperature taken, and confirm that you have not travelled in the last 14 days, have not had contact with anyone who tested positive for COVID-19, and do not have any other symptoms.
- You will then proceed to the sanctuary, where you will sit in a designated area to ensure that 6 feet social distancing is maintained between groups. You will leave your mask on properly throughout worship.
- Worship will begin with time for joys and concerns, with efforts to minimize movement and contact during this time.
- Music during worship will be piano, organ, or pre-recorded. If you or someone you know can play a stringed instrument, we would also love guest musicians.
- Children will not come forward during children's time, but families with children will be seated near the front so they can participate. Children will remain in worship; there will not be children's church or nursery.
- The offering will be collected at the door in a basket.
- After worship, you will exit through the door closest to you. We will maintain 6 feet social distancing as you exit as well.

The church building will remain closed at all other times for now. Once we have practice with conducting worship safely, we will begin to think about what other types of in-person gatherings can take place.

We hope that this new way of worship will be short-lived. We know that Delta United Methodist Church has weathered great challenges in the past and come out stronger for them, and we look forward to the ways in which our congregation can grow closer together and closer to God through this trial we are facing.

Yours in Christ,

The DUMC ReLaunch Team