

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35

Dear Members and Friends of Opequon Church,

At Opequon Church, we love one another. We enjoy seeing each other and being together. We cherish our worship life. We are devoted to fellowship, education, and mission. We seek to take discipleship seriously. Because of our Opequon personality, our “DNA,” these last months have been especially difficult for us. We have struggled to be the church in new ways, according to a new rhythm. Thankfully, through the gift of technology, through the dedication of church staff, leaders, and members, the ministry of Opequon Church has never shutdown or closed. Honestly, in many ways, through your support and generosity, it has thrived. Once again, we take comfort and inspiration from the example of the earliest believers, who “spent much time together in the temple” *and* “broke bread at home...with glad and generous hearts” (Acts 2:46). We remember the good news of the gospel: “And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). We have discovered that God’s goodness and grace cannot be canceled.

**At a meeting of the session on Tuesday, June 16, we, the elders, after thoughtful discussion and prayerful deliberation, having considered input and recommendations from the congregation, several of our ministry teams, health care professionals, and guidelines from church and government sources, approved the following re-entry plan:**

- Beginning Sunday, June 28 – 6:30 pm Outdoor Worship at the Picnic Shelter/Lawn
  - ✓ Approximately 40 minutes in length
  - ✓ Please bring your own lawn chairs
  - ✓ Restrictions Will Apply: Minimum 6’ social distancing; no singing; no restrooms on the property will be available; have a mask available for unanticipated interaction less than 6’

Outdoor worship through summer months on Sunday evenings – June 28, July 12, July 26, August 9, August 23, weather permitting

- Beginning Sunday, July 5<sup>th</sup>

9:00 am Livestreamed Full Worship Service (only Worship Team present)

  - ✓ Our current livestreamed worship will be available to you at 9:00 am or any time after
  - ✓ This is the service that the congregational surveys overwhelmingly indicated must be our priority and must continue as is.

(over)

### 11:00 am In-Person Worship

- ✓ 45-minute service with restrictions for all worshipers
  - ✓ Minimum 6' social distancing at all times inside the building
  - ✓ Wearing face masks mandatory for entrance to the building and must always be worn in the building
  - ✓ No congregational singing or spoken responses
  - ✓ Advanced registration and reserved seating for worship each week through phone call or Sign-Up Genius
  - ✓ Limited seating capacity in Sanctuary (75)
  - ✓ Printed bulletins on pews
  - ✓ Restrooms available one person at a time
- Small groups are being allowed to gather on our church grounds at this time, if they too observe the restrictions.
  - This is all part of a trial period and experience – the Session, under the advisement of the Church Staff, Worship, Safety, and Health Teams may change the schedule, the details, or the restrictions at any time. We would strongly encourage those who are most compromised and those who are not able to adhere to the restrictions to stay home, stay safe, and worship with us through livestream.

As our congregation moves toward re-entry, we acknowledge that we cannot accommodate each person's individual desires but will do what we believe is best for the congregation. We acknowledge that we will not please everyone, but we will seek to value everyone as a child of God. As we shared in a previous letter, we may make mistakes along the way. There will surely be awkward moments as we adjust to new protocols and practices. There will be times of frustration, disappointment, and grief. Our focus must be, however, on our love for one another, our care for one another's well-being and for the good of the community where we live, work, and serve. Let us be faithful, then – to God and to one another – as we receive the gifts and work through the challenges of this time in the life of our congregation and world. Let us remember that we are the hands, heart, and feet of Christ wherever we go and wherever we are.

Together in Christ's Service,

The Session  
Opequon Presbyterian Church