Dear Church Family,

Your pastoral staff, along with our Coronavirus Task Force made up of our committee chairs (Joe Hampton-Deacons, Howell Todd-Finance, Tony Tucker-Human Resources, Tom Richter-Building & Grounds), several local officials, healthcare professionals, and at-large members, have agreed with the following plan for our congregation to resume in-person gatherings. This plan is based on 3 core commitments that serve as the foundation of our reasoning as we begin the process of gathering again. Those commitments are listed below.

* *COMMITMENT 1: We gather to praise and glorify Jesus above all else****.*** This requires a heart and an attitude of worship. Worship isn’t about us. It’s about Jesus. This is our highest priority as we gather.
* *COMMITMENT 2: We gather as responsible Christians, citizens, and neighbors.*This means we do our best to honor our commitments to Christ, our government, and our community. We have to act responsibly together and make sacrifices for the good of others.
* *COMMITMENT 3: We gather understanding that this season is temporary***.** As we gather under new guidelines and protocols, we are all called to be understanding, reasonable, and sacrificial for the good of others. Let’s have the attitude of “we *get* to do this” as a joy and privilege and not the attitude of “we *have* to do this” as though it’s a burden.

Phase 1 includes resuming in-person gatherings on ***May 31st*** following Governor Bill Lee’s recommendations. Governor Lee has strongly encouraged churches to “conduct as many activities as possible remotely” and “to continue offering online services and other creative methods of worship and ministry.” Governor Lee’s “Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Team” have offered these *extensive* guidelines for us to implement when meeting again:

* Wear face coverings
* Practice 6-foot social distancing
* No more than 50% capacity
* Children’s activities/nursery should not resume
* Eliminate greeting times
* Require a COVID-19 symptom and temperature check on all staff and volunteers
* Temporarily replace choir with soloists or small groups
* Encourage folks to stay home if sick or have recently been in contact with sick
* Everyone 65 years and older, people with disabilities, serious respiratory issues, should not return
* You can read Gov. Lee’s full guidelines on our church website or by clicking here ([Guidance for Places of Worship](https://mcusercontent.com/9d84ca929e88358ba9aaf24f1/files/f066fe1c-ec84-4b63-90e1-ac8d8a454d71/House_of_Worship_Guidance_FBCI.pdf))

In order to follow these guidelines, it is necessary that we temporarily modify our worship gatherings. This means that when we begin gathering on May 31st, things will look very differently than they did the last time we gathered. Below, we have outlined how our gatherings will look so that you can prepare yourself to worship with us. Here is what you need to do in a nutshell:

**WHAT YOU NEED TO DO BEFORE MAY 31ST**

1. **Step 1:** ***Prepare your heart for worship.*** Read our “Core Commitments” and make sure you are spiritually prepared to gather for worship.
2. **Step 2:** ***Sign-up for your service of choice.*** Go to our website ([www.fbchuntingdon.com](http://www.fbchuntingdon.com)) or call the church office (731-986-5000—Monday-Thursday from 9am-4:30pm) and sign-up for the service you are planning to attend (8:45am or 10:45am). Everyone will need to sign up each week during this phase. Sign-ups for each week will begin on Monday mornings at 9am. There is no childcare, so please sign-up your children who will be attending with you.
3. **Step 3:** ***Protect yourself and others.*** Before leaving your home for worship, check your temperature to make sure you do not have a fever or any COVID-19 symptoms. Bring a face covering with you, and maintain social distancing at all times. We will have face coverings available for those that do not have them.
4. **Step 4:** ***Park near the Sanctuary.***Arrive at the church no more than 15 minutes before the service time, and park near the sanctuary door you plan on entering (Main St, Church St-Welcome Center, Carroll Bank). As you approach the building, follow the instructions of our greeters and ushers for entering and exiting the building.

We know that this will be different, but please remember that this is *temporary*. We are excited that we have the opportunity to worship together again even under these guidelines. Below is the expanded rationale in order to help you better understand why we have had to make some of these adjustments to our worship gatherings.

**1) We Will Be Offering Two Worship Services to Accommodate Our Church Size**

***8:45am-9:30am—Early Worship Service 10:45am-11:30am—Late Worship Service***

* Due to the size of our congregation and the 50% capacity guideline of Gov. Lee, we will be adding an additional worship service. Each service will have a limited seating capacity to ensure that we can maintain social distancing in our worship center. Our two services are spaced to ensure that we have adequate time between each service for cleaning.
* We are asking everyone to sign-up for the service of their choice each week during this phase. Signing up ensures that we do not exceed our limited capacity for a single service. We may have to add additional services depending on attendance and changing guidelines. Sign-ups for each week will begin on Monday mornings at 9am. You can sign-up online by visiting our church website or by calling the church office (Monday-Thursday from 9am-4:30pm). Family units should sign-up as a group. Once a service is filled to capacity, sign-ups will close for that service. We will be reserving some seats to accommodate visitors.
* Please keep in mind that if you sign-up and do not attend, you are taking seats away from others, and if you do not sign-up and come, you are also taking seats away from others who have signed up. We must all do our part to make this process work smoothly.

**2) Our Plan for Entering and Exiting the Building**

* Only our sanctuary will be open during Phase 1. Attendees should enter by the 3 main sanctuary doors (Main St, Church St-Welcome Center, Carroll Bank). Please park near the door you plan on entering to reduce traffic around the building.
* Doors will open 15 minutes before each service and will be closed 5 minutes after the service begins. They will also be closed 15 minutes after each service concludes so that we can begin cleaning. If you arrive more than 15 minutes early, please wait in your car until the doors open. This will help us with social distancing and keep us from congregating near the doors.
* Greeters will open and hold all doors, and ushers will seat each attendee. Ushering will help ensure that we maintain social distancing and maximize our available seating. Please see the provided color-coded map for parking and entering the building. Those entering from Carroll Bank (green entrance) will be ushered to the green loge. Those entering from Main St. (red entrance) will be ushered to the red loge. Those entering from Church St-Welcome Center (blue entrance) will be ushered to the floor or to the balcony (blue sections).
* For the health and safety of our children and volunteers during Phase 1, we will not be providing childcare. We will also be seating family units together. Infants, toddlers, and children are always welcome in our worship services. Worship is what we do as a community of faith and everyone is welcome. We understand that this may cause some difficulties, but thank you for what you do when you bring your children to church. Please know that your family, with all of its noise, struggle, commotion, and joy, are not simply tolerated; you are a vital part of the community gathered in worship.
* We will dismiss each service in an orderly fashion to ensure that we maintain social distancing. Everyone will exit through the doors they entered.

**3) Other Ways We Are Seeking to Minimize Risk**

* We will be performing COVID-19 symptom and temperature checks on all of our staff and volunteers each Sunday.
* We will have face coverings available at each door for those that might not have them.
* The worship center will be sanitized after each service.
* All bathrooms and water fountains will be closed to help better protect our attendees. Our services will be 45 minutes or less in order to alleviate most bathroom needs. We have hand sanitizer stations at the doors for your convenience.
* We will not have a greeting/handshaking time during the services. We will not be using pew Bibles, hymnals, or passing out bulletins. We will not be passing the offering plate. Offering baskets will be at the doors, or you can give online.

**PHASES FOR RESUMING OUR ACTIVITIES***\* All dates are subject to change based on COVID-19 developments.*

**Phase 1—Modified Sunday Morning Worship** (May 31 – TBD)

* Sunday morning in-person worship gatherings resume with *two* options: 8:45am & 10:45am.
	+ Online worship options continue
	+ No childcare or age-related activities
	+ Register for your service of choice through our website or by calling the church office.
* Staff resumes normal office hours.

**Phase 2—Begin Adding Some Small Groups** (TBD)

* Online worship and small groups continue
* Groups of 10 or less are encouraged to gather in homes for small groups or to watch online worship following CDC guidelines.

**Phase 3—Resume All “Normal” Activities** (TBD)

Thank you for your patience and support during this season. If you have any questions or concerns during this time, please don’t hesitate to contact the church office.

Pastor Jacob, Your Church Staff, & Your Coronavirus Task Force

