



National Capital  
PRESBYTERY  
MISSIONAL · PASTORAL · PROPHETIC

September 17, 2020

Greetings,

On behalf of the Leadership Council, we wanted to address some questions that have arisen as churches consider when and how to resume in person operations. As you can imagine, the number one question we are getting is “When can we safely return to our facilities?” While we cannot provide a specific date, we urge each church to consider the guidelines for gatherings set by your local jurisdictions, the capacity of your congregations to take the appropriate precautions, and any unique conditions of your own facilities.

One important step we recommend is to contact your insurance company. Many insurance companies, including Church Mutual the company many of our churches use, DO NOT cover the church for liability incurred from virus transmission. You might consider requiring releases, particularly for any tenants and other users of your facilities, in order to help protect your congregations, and we strongly encourage seeking legal counsel in crafting one.

Our best recommendation is to have clear written protocols around safety and cleanliness that incorporate ALL mandates and recommendations from your jurisdictions and to ensure that everyone using your facility is not just aware of them, but following them.

We continue to believe that large indoor gatherings for Sunday morning worship are not recommended at this time for our congregations. Even best practices offer no guarantee against the spread of the virus. Instead, we hope that our churches return to the way The Church first began: small gatherings. Earlier this summer, we put together some resources on how to facilitate small group gatherings. The resource included a 7-week scripted devotional that leaders in our churches, both clergy and members of the congregation, could use as a word-for-word guide OR a starting point for building a liturgy that would work best for your context. We also released a brief training video on how to facilitate a small group gathering.

You can find those here...

- <https://thepresbytery.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/NCP-Small-Group-Devotionals.pdf>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=731NRlll3Sg&feature=youtu.be>

We will also be offering ongoing support for lay leaders in our churches who are answering the call to facilitate small group gathering. There will be regular meetings and check-in to share ideas, learn new skills, talk with coaches, and build comradery with others engaged in the same ministry throughout our presbytery.

These gathering are not intended to *replace* your Sunday morning digital worship services. The hope is that they would complement the ongoing ministry of your church and offer people a safer way to gather in person. Our staff is here to help your process through these conversations and decisions. If it would

be helpful, which it already has been for many of our churches, we will gladly join you for one of your meetings or discussions.

Thank you for the work you have done over these past 6 months to maintain the Christian witness in your physical and digital communities. We hope that you continue to discover new ways of being the church for this unique time and place.

*Rev. John Molina-Moore*  
General Presbyter

*Elder Charles Barber*  
Chair, Leadership Council