

***And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together....but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.***

Hebrews 10:24-25

The Dayton Church sanctuary will re-open for public worship on Sunday, June 20, 2021. While some will begin to attend in person, we know that some will continue to worship at home for some time. We give thanks, then, for the promise of our faith—that the Lord God will bless and keep us, the risen Christ is with us, and the Holy Spirit connects us with believers near and far. 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).

The Dayton Church asks everyone who attends indoor worship to abide by the following:

- To not attend if you are experiencing any COVID symptoms (cough, fever or chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, muscle or body aches, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, headache, new fatigue, nausea or vomiting, congestion or runny nose), had contact with someone recently diagnosed with COVID or who has COVID symptoms;

In order to love neighbor as self (Mark 12:31) and strive for the safety of all who have not been fully vaccinated, we *recommend* the following practices:

- That all wear masks when entering/exiting our worship space. All those who have been unvaccinated are asked to consider wearing their masks for the entirety of worship. If you have been vaccinated, you are invited to consider taking masks off when seated.
- That social distance be maintained from those who are attending, outside of individuals in your own household before, during the worship service by sitting in pews designated as open, unless you know that everyone you are interacting with has been fully vaccinated. Ushers will be on hand to help seat you and cannot guarantee favorite or traditional pews at this time.
- That worshippers enter and exit through sanctuary side aisles so as to avoid the livestreaming equipment, which is located in the center aisle towards the front of the sanctuary.
- That bulletins be picked-up in the front & rear of the sanctuary.
- That you leave your offering in the plates at the front and rear of the sanctuary, as they will not be passed for collection; you are also invited to continue online contributions or to give through the mail.

- That you sing only when directed, as singing will be limited out of an abundance of caution. The congregation will be invited to share in spoken unison prayers. Worshippers will be invited to hum along with music offered, and will be invited to sing aloud the final hymn and closing response. It is our strong recommendation that you mask for music sung aloud. Directions will be provided by the worship leader and in our bulletins.
- That there be gracious understanding that our church is following science-based recommendations regarding air flow in the sanctuary. While the sanctuary will be cooled with our air conditioning system prior to worship, during worship the air conditioning (which lacks a system of filtration) will be turned off and our windows will remain open.
- That you refrain from enjoying fellowship and greetings in the sanctuary at the end of worship. We ask that all fellowship, greeting, and conversation take place outside in our specially designated area.
- That you hear one another's concerns and needs for safety and health without judgement, and respect the choices of each individual to protect self and others.

While we seek to minimize risk by asking that those who attend to abide by the above covenant, there is risk when gathering together. Whether immunized or not, gathering with people increases your risk of contracting COVID-19 and the Dayton Church cannot guarantee that you (or your children) will not become infected with the coronavirus.

We will strive to ensure no one should feel pressured to return before they are ready; services will continue to be livestreamed.

As this congregation begins to resume public activities, please know that we will do so through a careful process of discussion and discernment, with an abundance of caution and concern for those who are most vulnerable, upon consideration of the best scientific knowledge at our disposal, in the spirit of constant prayer, and with full trust in the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. 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. We will have countless opportunities to exercise the spiritual gifts of patience, kindness, gentleness, and self-control. But there will also be blessings. There will be wonderful surprises, great celebrations, and moments of deep satisfaction. We will get to see glimpses of the new thing God is doing, even now. 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 be guided by the Word, responsive to the Spirit, and open to the grace of God. Let us remember that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus.

The Session of the First Presbyterian Church at Dayton, June 15, 2021