

Dear members and friends of Franklin United Methodist Church,

On March 13, in response to the growing concerns regarding the spread of COVID-19, I made the difficult decision to cancel in-person worship. The following Sunday, a Church Council meeting was called, and the decision was made to follow the mandates coming from the Governor's Office and the response of the Franklin Public Schools. If the public schools were closed, the Council decided, we would not hold in-person worship and our facility would be closed (with limited exceptions).

For the last 12 weeks, we have participated in virtual gatherings in place of in-person worship and meetings in our facility. The leaders and staff of the church have done their best to adapt quickly to new ways of being the church. Meetings are being held virtually. Our website has been updated. We have added an online giving option. Our Tuesday and Thursday evening services of prayer, praise, and checking-in have provided regular opportunities for us to connect briefly in an informal but structured way during the week. Our Sunday morning services have provided opportunities for us to share our faith with one another, allowing us to reflect upon our current situation and consider what a "new normal" might look like after the pandemic. While these services do not replace the in-person relationships we so desperately yearn for (and need), they have enabled us to continue nurturing our relationships with God and one another through this time of physical distancing and quarantine.

In the middle of May, the Governor's Office released a four-phased approach to re-opening the state of Massachusetts. On Sunday, May 31, the leadership of the church gathered virtually to develop a plan for reopening the facility and resuming in-person ministry and worship.

*Franklin United Methodist Church has a responsibility to you and our community to reopen in a way that is faithful, transparent, and mindful of evolving best practices. Using the framework of the Governor's plan for reopening the state and building off recommendations from the New England Annual Conference, public health officials, and gleanings from the experiences of other congregations around the country, the leadership has developed a systematic plan for reopening our facility and resuming in-person worship and ministry. The summary plan for reopening the Franklin United Methodist Church facility and resuming in-person worship and ministry can be found on the reverse side of this letter.*

I hope that this plan will help guide us all into a new normal and help us understand what to expect as we move through the various stages of reopening. If you have any questions about this plan (or just want to talk), feel free to call, text, email, or set up a time for us to meet virtually. I look forward to seeing you (virtually) in worship on Sunday and/or at one of our praise, prayer, and checking-in services on Tuesday and Thursday. Remember, details for how to join our virtual gatherings can be found on the church website ([franklinumc.org](http://franklinumc.org)). You can also subscribe to the website to stay up-to-date on all that is going on and how to join our virtual gatherings.

Peace.

Pastor Jacob

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		Stay-at-Home & Safer-at-Home	Phase <b>1</b> Start	Phase <b>2</b> Cautious	Phase <b>3</b> Vigilant	Phase <b>4</b> New Normal
Massachusetts Reopening Summary	<b>OVERVIEW</b>	Essential businesses and services only	Limited industries resume operations with severe restrictions	Additional industries resume operations with restrictions and capacity limitations	Additional industries resume operations with guidance	Development of vaccines and/or treatments enable resumption of "new normal"
	<b>Recommendation for High-Risk Populations</b>	Stay home. Stay healthy.	Stay home. Stay healthy.	Stay home. Stay healthy.	Stay home. Stay healthy.	Resume public interactions with physical distancing
	<b>Gathering size</b>	<10	<10	<10 (?)	TBD	TBD
	<b>Religious Communities</b> (WORSHIP on Mass Reopening Plan)	Gathering restrictions	On <b>May 18</b> open with guidelines, outdoor services are encouraged	Open with updated guidelines, outdoor services are encouraged	Open with updated guidelines, outdoor services are encouraged	Full resumption of activity in the "new normal"
Franklin United Methodist Church Reopening Summary	<b>WORSHIP</b>	Worshipful Conversation & Fellowship ONLINE ONLY	Worshipful Conversation & Fellowship ONLINE ONLY	Worshipful Conversation & Fellowship ONLINE ONLY. Worship leaders may gather to lead from sanctuary.	Worship in the Sanctuary with minimal attendance (<25). No Choir.	Resume In-person worship. Set sanctuary with fewer seats. Continue ONLINE opportunities.
	<b>PRAISE &amp; PRAYER &amp; CHECKING-IN</b>	ONLINE	ONLINE	ONLINE	ONLINE	In-person & ONLINE
	<b>GROUPS &amp; COMMITTEES</b>	Virtual Gatherings ONLY	Virtual Gatherings ONLY	Virtual Gatherings ONLY	Small gatherings physical (<25) and virtually	Gatherings virtually & physically
	<b>OFFICE</b>	Closed. Pastor and Secretary work from home.	Closed. Pastor and Secretary work from home.	Closed. Pastor and Secretary <u>may</u> work in office.	Closed to visitors. Secretary resumes regular in-office hours. Pastor available in-office by appointment.	Open to visitors. Secretary and Pastor resume in-person work.
	<b>PASTORAL CARE</b>	Phone, Text & Email, and Virtual Appointments	Phone, Text & Email, and Virtual Appointments	Phone, Text & Email, and Virtual Appointments	Phone, Text & Email, Virtual Appointment, and In-person Appointments at church	Phone, Text & Email, Virtual Appointment, In-person Appointment at church and in community public spaces. Nursing home and hospital visitation as permitted