

UPDATE ON ZION'S REFORMED MINISTRIES  
May 13, 2020

Dear Members and Friends:

As we have moved in Mercer County from the red phase to the yellow phase and await moving to the green phase, the Consistory has been in discussion about how to proceed with worship and ministry at Zion's. First some important information about risks.

As you may be aware, social distancing is a strategy to reduce the rate of infection primarily for the purpose of ensuring adequate medical resources. The COVID-19 virus has not gone away and people will continue to become ill. We now know that this virus can infect people of all ages and many will remain asymptomatic increasing the risk of exposure. It is only through testing for the virus or antibodies that we can know for sure if someone has had the virus. And we do not know for sure if contracting the virus confers any immunity from being reinfected. So there is still a high degree of risk in daily life.

The yellow phase we are in still limits gatherings to no more than 25 people and preliminary information on the green phase where we will have to follow state department of health and CDC guidelines indicate that gatherings may not exceed 50 people. And social distancing and masks will still likely be required. And those in high risk groups will still be advised to shelter in place. So life will not be back to our previous normal in any way, shape, or fashion.

There are many considerations to opening a church for worship—we won't be able to pass offering plates; we can't take communion from a common service tray; we will need to social distance in the sanctuary; we will need to have contact surface and general disinfection procedures in place to wipe down all light switches, door handles, stair railings, pew backs, and restrooms; we will need to remove all bibles and hymnals from the pews. In addition, research is showing that we will not be able to sing for a long time to come as singing is deemed a "super-spreader" activity due to the aerosolized particles that remain in the air for hours after the singing is done.

Here is the good news! Live streaming worship has been welcomed and we have more people engaging in worship than we have on a normal Sunday morning sanctuary worship. People who have been absent in the life of the church are reconnected and families separated by distance are worshipping together on-line. We are doing as the gospel asks and reaching even to the ends of the earth with the good news we bring.

The other blessing is that you all have been so faithful in your contributions to the ministry of Zion's. Our finances are being maintained at normal levels because you have been making sure your contributions get to the office. (Many thanks to Julie for picking up mail once a week and to Karen who has worked with Julie to keep the

finances current and make the deposits). We did apply for and receive a Payroll Payment Protection loan but time has shown that we did not need that additional money and so the loan proceeds have been returned to the Small Business Administration, hopefully to benefit another small business in greater need.

**Here is where we are at now**—we will continue to do on-line worship for the foreseeable future. The Consistory has approved the purchase of equipment that will allow us to have internet access in the sanctuary and be able to do more professional broadcasting with camera and sound. Lori will be able to provide music during worship but the sanctuary will be limited to the pastor, the music director and a couple of people to run camera and the control board.

The office will be open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Individuals are welcome to stop by the church to say ‘hi’ or pray and meditate. Please wear a mask and maintain social distance to protect staff. We will continue to send worship materials out by email and mail and posting on our new webpage at [www.zionsucc.org](http://www.zionsucc.org) under the Pastor’s Corner tab. We will continue to do a live stream worship through our Facebook page and will post the video on YouTube each week at our channel Zion’s Reformed-Greenville PA. We will continue to connect with our children through Zoom meetings. The Consistory and other groups in the church will meet via Zoom meeting. We will continue the Immerse Bible Study by Zoom. We may even introduce a Zoom fellowship session so we can see each other and chat.

Consistory will continue to monitor guidelines and assess the safety and well-being of the congregation. Please know that we have been informed by some that they will not feel safe returning to worship until there is a vaccine. And please feel free to discuss your concerns or share your thoughts with any member of Consistory, Julie or Pastor June.

Jeremiah 29:11

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”