

May 27, 2020

Dear Matthews UMC Member and Friend:

Your Key Leaders and Staff team continue to monitor and review issues surrounding the re-opening of Matthews UMC. As we move towards returning to in-person worship and other gatherings being held in our building, we want to ensure that when we come together again it is done in a way that best addresses the safety of everyone who walks onto our campus. Many changes and protective measures will be required, and we intend to implement those in the most responsible way possible. We have created a Task Force to offer suggestions around our planning, and it includes representatives from many of our program and administrative ministries. This intentionally indicates an openness to information from across our church, as well as new data as it becomes available, which will require ongoing updates and revisions to this plan.

The Task Force is reviewing a multi-phased approach using these guiding principles:

- Governor Cooper's direction for North Carolina and Mayor Higdon's for Matthews
- Strong recommendations from Bishop Leeland, the Western North Carolina Conference UMC leader
- Honoring Matthews UMC's Mission to be open for all, as we seek to Reach, Teach, Praise and Serve in the safest, most informed way possible.

As you know, each stage outlined by the Governor is dependent on evidence that we have successfully blunted the spread of the virus and accomplished the goal of each of the stages he outlined. This document shares **Phase 2** of MUMC's plan with the hope of offering more phases by or before the end of June as we take into account the latest information and guidelines available to us.

MUMC's Phase 2: May 18 – June 30, 2020 (the church remains closed except for essential staff)

- All those entering the church will practice 6-foot social distancing, wear a face mask when outside their office space, perform hand hygiene upon entering the building, after each contact with high-touch surfaces, and throughout the day as necessary.
- Staff will not be returning to work at the church until June 30, or later. Once they are allowed to return, they will be observing all health and safety guidelines. Some will be returning on a phased-in schedule, others will be adopting a combination of working remotely and at church, and some will likely continue working remotely for an indefinite period of time.
- Exceptions will include those essential to volunteering for worship and ministry work being led by our staff.
- Weekly worship at 9:30 and 11:00 will remain online.
- Funerals and weddings will resume once we begin offering Sunday worship on-site.
- Children and Youth programming will continue online through June 30. Some outdoor groups may begin meeting outside the buildings under the following conditions: groups of no more than 10 (including leaders), scheduled through our Facilities Office, no one is allowed inside the buildings for any reason. The parking lot or green spaces being used

will be closed to public access and only open for drop off and pick up. No one may remain in the parking areas or wait on the grounds during the gatherings unless they remain in their vehicles at all times. Participants will practice social distancing, observe hand sanitizing upon arrival and prior to departure, and no one may linger on the campus beyond the end of their gathering. Scheduling buses will not be available due to interior size and seating configurations that make social distancing untenable.

- Meals and food will not be provided or served during this phase.
- The Facilities staff will be implementing many new cleaning and sterilization procedures during this time.

Additionally, we will continue outreach to people in need under the guidance of our Global Impact Team, as they assess how best to support our partners in ministry going forward. We all need to be creative in adapting to new ways of being the church as we continue ministering in and for our community.

I pray you stay safe and well,

**Pastor Paul Craig**  
**Executive Pastor**