

Members and Friends of Westminster Presbyterian Church,

We are praying for you in this time of pandemic. We know that everyone would like to come back together for worship. However, we feel a heavy responsibility to provide a safe place for worship. Last night the Session discussed the issues that need to be resolved before we can safely open our building.

While there are a lot of smaller issues, by far the most complicated issue is cleaning the building between each use. The Building and Grounds Committee reported that they have not yet been able to put together a reasonable cleaning protocol citing the complicated guidelines set out by our insurance company, and the Center for Disease Control ([CDC](#)). In addition, we neither have the funds nor the staff to clean between all uses of the building.

For that reason, the Session appointed a task force of members of the congregation with experience and knowledge to resolve the issues, and present a proposal to the Session on cleaning protocols, in-person worship practices, a method to fairly decide who will have access to worship if the numbers are limited by social distancing, and when we can let renters back into the building.

With these things in mind, the task force was given to August 1st to present a proposal and the costs associated with resolution of the issues and a tentative plan to begin opening the building in September, after Labor Day.

We are aware that this will be disappointing to some members and a relief to others. We are also aware that there are members who have not been able to access online ministry and worship because of technology deficits. The Session will survey the congregation to determine what technologies are accessible to you and how we can improve the way we provide the church's care and ministry making connections with you.

While the Session has not adopted a specific plan for "in-person" worship practices when we open the building; among the changes will be seating for family groups in a socially distanced pattern, the wearing of masks to prevent the inadvertent spread of the virus, traffic patterns in the church building, offering plates will not be passed, in person communion may be suspended, and most painful of all may be the lack of public singing.

Some other aesthetic changes may not be appealing. Musicians and worship leaders may need to stand behind plexiglass shields because when projecting their voices, aerosols can project 36 feet which is halfway through the seating area in the sanctuary. Currently our worship team for the contemporary service is recording in Boulder Hall, which gives them more social distancing space than the sanctuary and it is easier to clean. Even though we may not be able to sing during "in-person" worship we will be able to present the music on the screens in the same way that we are through streaming. Some of you will find it more satisfying to worship at home where you can sing freely with the Worship Team and Hymn leaders.

In addition, we need to resolve some technical issues to both broadcast and amplify in the sanctuary for in-person worship. Crossover audio issues are complicated once we turn on the sound system in the sanctuary.

Please know that our prayers are with all of you during a time of social isolation. We pray that you will remain safe as we prepare for the day we will return to our sanctuary. May the spirit of God's patience uphold you during this time of relative social isolation. The peace of Christ be with you.