



**VESTAVIA HILLS**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## **Safely Coming Back**

### **Reopening Update by Bill Brunson, Senior Pastor**

### **September 10, 2020**

Dear Church Family,

We are excited to make our first steps toward in-building activities and in-building worship. However, while we are excited, we are also cautious and still a bit hesitant because your safety is always a primary concern.

Beginning this week, we will allow small groups to start meeting in the building during the week and on certain times on Sundays. For your group to meet in the building you will need to contact Melinda Burnett ([mburnett@vhumc.org](mailto:mburnett@vhumc.org)) to reserve an available space. You may not be in your "usual" room based off the size of your group and the need to physically distance. Each group will need to keep track of attendance so that group leaders can contact any who were exposed if a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 is discovered. When meeting in the building, we ask that you keep your mask on during the class and maintain physical distancing.

The porticos of the church will still be available for your use. Simply reserve one of those by contacting Melinda Burnett.

Beginning on Sunday, September 13, we will begin allowing Sunday School Classes to meet in the building at either 9:45 am or 5:00 pm. Again, you may not be in your "usual" room based off the size of your group and physical distancing so please contact Melinda Burnett ([mburnett@vhumc.org](mailto:mburnett@vhumc.org)) or Suzanne Scott Trammell ([sstrammell@vhumc.org](mailto:sstrammell@vhumc.org)) to reserve a space. Also, we ask that each class assess whether their members wish to meet in-person in-building or continue online. When meeting in the building – we ask that you keep your mask on during the class and maintain physical distancing. Each class will need to keep track of attendance so that the class leaders can contact any who were exposed if a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 is discovered.

#### **Worship Services:**

When weather allows, we will continue the outdoor pop-up service at 8:30 am each Sunday for the foreseeable future because we know there are many who are not ready to return to in-building worship. Each Saturday you will receive the notice of the service through email and that email will contain the lyrics for the songs to be sung.

We will also continue to launch our **Online Worship Service each Sunday at 8:30 am.**



Beginning on **Sunday, September 20**, we will offer one in-building traditional worship service each Sunday in the **sanctuary at 11:00 am**. We will limit attendance to 150 persons. For the first few weeks, we will be asking for reservations through an online system that will be emailed to you on Mondays. You will also be registering IF you wish to place your infant in a nursery during the service and/or you will be sending your child to Worship Care following children's time.

In the sanctuary, the pews will be marked to allow for physical distancing, and the service will be reduced in length. We will also be using our video screen to provide some of the elements of worship, and to help guide us since we will not distribute bulletins at this time, and there will not be any Children's Bags for the service.

We will have offering plates located at the entrances since we won't be "passing the plates" during the service.

We have installed "air purifying" technology into the HVAC system in the Sanctuary to hopefully help reduce the transmission of germs.

Our hope is to begin **Contemporary Worship in Tyson Hall on Sunday, October 4, at 11:00 am**. We will begin that service limiting attendance to 100 persons.

As we safely resume in-building worship – we will also be considering when other in-building services will resume. We will also be examining additional options for safe worship experiences (i.e. other outdoor experiences, "drive in" worship, etc.)

Our hope is to begin Children and Student Sunday School classes in October. However, an exact date has not been set. Our Student Ministries will continue to adapt their programming to safely meet the needs of our students. And our Preschool and Elementary areas will continue to share Sunday School resources each weekend via email.

Our hope is to restart Wednesday Evening Meals on Wednesday, October 7. The dining area will be set up differently, but the food and fellowship will be a wonderful blessing when this is able to happen.

For now, most of our Church Committees and Teams will continue to meet through ZOOM.

We will not "assemble" for the Church-Wide Assembly we have each September. This gathering provides an update on the programs and ministries of the church while also sharing more detailed information related to our fiscal year which ended on June 30. Look for an email on Sunday, September 20, that will provide a video link for this presentation. We will also place the link in the Notes on Thursday, September 24.



I want to close by sharing with you what we are calling:

**Our Safety Covenant:**

In order to safely resume in-building meetings and worship, we have developed this safety covenant. We ask that you make this covenant with us to love and care for each other.

**We will** wear masks.

**We will** stay six feet apart.

**We will** love each other enough to NOT give hugs, shake hands, or fist bumps.

**We will** wash our hands often.

**We will** enter and leave quickly – not lingering and grouping up along the way.

**We will** NOT attend anything in-building or in-person if experiencing a fever, cough, chills, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, muscle or body aches, headache, loss of smell and/or taste, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, tingling in fingers and/or toes, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

**We will** understand that some persons are immune compromised or have pre-existing conditions, and while we do not face those issues, we will respect them and love them as we love ourselves by keeping them safe.

**We will** be patient and understand that everyone is trying and are doing their best.

May God bless you.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill".