

May 26, 2021

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Romans 8:38-39

Members and Friends of Alamance Presbyterian Church,

I am so pleased to write to you that at our meeting last Sunday night, the Session voted to relax most of our COVID-19 restrictions for worship and community life at Alamance Presbyterian Church. Beginning **this Sunday, May 30**, mask-wearing will be **OPTIONAL**, not mandatory, for most church activities.

The blue tape has already been removed from the sanctuary, and all seating will be open starting **this Sunday**. We will no longer require “Welcome Back Cards” for contact tracing. “Soft” congregational singing will be permitted. (We do ask our strong singers to refrain from using full voice while seated among the congregation.)

In the coming weeks, ushers will begin collecting offering again. We will still have a collection box in the narthex — and we highly encourage everyone who contributes electronically to continue to do so. That has been a saving grace for us during the pandemic, and we want it to continue!

We will soon take communion in worship, though it will look different than our intinction practices prior to the pandemic.

Beginning **Sunday, June 6**, small choir ensembles will sing in the choir loft. Our current plan is to resume full choir activities in **August**, after what would be the usual July summer break.

We will even have coffee at **9 a.m.** in the Gathering Room **starting Sunday, June 13**. Prepackaged food items will be available at coffee hour, soon after that.

You are free to sit with whomever you choose in worship, but we do ask for everyone to maintain social distance where possible. We still ask those who attend worship in person to stay in your pews for the passing of the peace. While we no longer **require** masks, wearing one at Alamance will always be welcome. You may see your pastors and other staff members wearing masks during worship and other activities. We celebrate the relaxation of restrictions, but we know that COVID-19 has not yet disappeared from our lives. We want everyone to feel free to engage in church life in ways that feel comfortable and safe to them.

The one area of community life that **still requires masks** is the APC Child Development Center. North Carolina state regulations continue to require children ages 5 and up to wear masks; and all teachers are masked as well. Parents are still not permitted to enter the CDC. Therefore, we still ask you to **use the breezeway door near the sanctuary to enter the building**. If you need to use the main door with the covered entrance, please enter and exit the building **wearing a mask** to respect the Child Development Center. Wearing a mask at that entrance sets the right example and tone for those who share our space.

Children’s Messages and Children’s Church will resume **Sunday, June 13**. Nursery care during worship will resume in coming weeks, as soon as we can recruit a cadre of dedicated volunteers to staff it. Mask wearing for children during worship and Children’s Church will be **optional**. The one portion of our population unable to be vaccinated is our children. As the parent of a seven-year-old, this is something of which I am acutely aware. My daughter will likely wear a mask at all indoor church activities until she is vaccinated. We want everyone to make the best choices for the safety and comfort of their own families.

Our plan for Vacation Bible School, though, is a little different. Session has decided to follow the Child Development Center plans for Vacation Bible School (**July 14-18**), since we share the spaces used for VBS. Outdoor activities **will not** require masks. Indoor activities in Brown Hall and other classrooms

will require masks. In addition, Vacation Bible School will only be open to children who register in advance. We have a limited amount of 1) space, 2) financial resources, and 3) volunteers for Vacation Bible School this year. In order to provide a safe and fun week of VBS, we will limit the number of registrations based on those three factors. Our week of VBS ends with a pool party at the Southeast Swim Club on **Sunday, July 18**.

As we enter this new phase of the pandemic, we believe the time is right to resume all church activities, particularly for those who have been fully vaccinated. Below, you'll find a brief timeline to keep track of when things are happening at Alamance. This is not intended to be comprehensive list!

We cannot wait to see you soon, and I for one am looking forward to seeing you all "face-to-face" at Alamance in the weeks to come.

In Christ's Love and Light,

Dr. Kyle Goodman

Summer Timeline for Resuming Activities at APC:

- **Sunday, May 30:** Mask wearing is optional. Welcome Back Cards are discontinued. Sanctuary at 100% seating capacity.
- **Monday, May 31:** Memorial Day. Church offices closed. Flags in the cemetery. *Taps Across America* at the cemetery flagpole at **3 p.m.**
- **Sunday, June 6:** Small Ensemble choral singing during worship begins.
- **Sunday, June 13:** Coffee hour resumes, but no prepackaged food yet. Children's Message and Children's Church resume.
- **June 16-19:** Passport Kid's Camp.
- **June-July TBA:** Nursery Care during worship resumes. Full Coffee Hour resumes. Ushering resumes. Communion will be celebrated during worship.
- **July 14-18:** Vacation Bible School, in the evening. **Pre-registration required.**
- **Sunday, July 18:** VBS Pool Party at the Southeast Swim Club.
- **August TBA:** Full Adult Choir rehearsals and performances resume.