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March 3, 2021

Members of Alamance Presbyterian Church,

Since the start of this pandemic, I have promised to write you when it is time to return to the sanctuary for worship. This is that letter! We are encouraged by the declining numbers of new COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in our community. We are very encouraged that many of you who are able have already been vaccinated. The Session believes it's time. At its meeting last Sunday night, the Session voted to resume in-person worship in the sanctuary on March 14 at 25% capacity. And so, exactly one year to the day when we were forced to make the incredibly difficult decision to suspend in-person gatherings, we will back in the sanctuary again.

We expect our numbers to be smaller at first. As more of our members are vaccinated, we hope to see our attendance increase. If you have been fully vaccinated for two weeks, we encourage you to come back to worship now. If have not yet had that opportunity, we urge you to carefully weigh your decision at this time. We will not require anyone to be vaccinated to come to church, but we hope everyone will make a conscientious decision about when to return.

Over the last year, many of you have stayed connected to worship through our Livestream service. That platform will continue to be available for those who feel more comfortable worshipping at home; and we will continue to engage you in the same ways we have over the last year. Though some will be home and some will be in the sanctuary, we will be one Church.

As Paul says in **1 Corinthians 12**, we are many parts, but "One Body."

When you attend worship in-person, we will ask some things from you.

- Please wear your mask properly for the duration of your time on our campus.
- Please sit in the designated areas and observe social distancing.
- We will ask you to complete a “Welcome Back Card” when you attend worship, one per household. That card will include the standard COVID-19 questions you have been asked in other places where people gather. You can print and fill it out ahead of time or fill it in when you arrive at church. One copy has been included with this letter.
- Plan to arrive between 9:35 and 9:55 a.m. Our doors will not open until 9:35 a.m. Before the pandemic, many of our folks came in during the announcements. We ask that you please be there by 9:55 a.m., as we will spend a few minutes checking in and answering questions before the service begins.
- Please enter and exit through the same door. We will reserve the side door for those with mobility challenges and those who need to sit closer to the front of the sanctuary. We ask others to enter from the front portico.

Worship will look a little different when you first return. The sanctuary will have designated seating sections. Services will last about 45 minutes. We will not have a choir or responsive readings, nor a children’s message and Children’s Church. We are not able to offer nursery care at this time. The staff will remain on the platform throughout the service.

Though we encourage you to hum or softly speak the words of our hymns, we ask that avid singers and choral voices refrain from singing inside their masks. We will pass the peace from our pews, with social distancing still in effect. We will not pass the plates for offering; instead, we will have collection boxes at each door. Still, we will praise God together, we will pray together, we will hear God’s word read and preached together, and we will continue to offer ourselves to God.

Though we battled frequent rainouts, many of us thoroughly enjoyed the outdoor services last fall. Our plan for Easter, Mother’s Day, and Pentecost is to worship outdoors on the lawn. This will allow the greatest number to attend. If it does rain for these services, we will be inside the sanctuary at 25% capacity for those special Sundays.

Please see the enclosed *Return to the Sanctuary F.A.Q.* and the *Welcome Back Card* to help you make your plans to return to worship at Alamance. We are excited to welcome you back to the sanctuary, and we look forward to seeing you when you feel ready!

In Christ’s Love & Light,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Kyle Goodman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. J. Kyle Goodman, Lead Pastor