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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings in the name of Christ. I hope this letter finds you well. In preparation for our return to in-person worship, I wanted to update you on several things that have been happening in the life of our church and prepare you for what you may find when we return.

As of now, we expect to resume in-person worship on Sunday, June 28. It will be a glorious day to be together for those who have missed worship in this wonderful space, even though it will be different. We want to inform you of what will be adjusted, what you can expect, and how you can help others experience the beauty of worship even though it has changed. In this packet, you will find instructions for what to bring, what you can expect, and a diagram of how to enter and exit the sanctuary. I am thankful for the thoughtful work of our Trustees, Finance Committee, Worship Team, and others who have helped in numerous ways. I am grateful to be your pastor and to be serving Christ with you here at FFUMC.

I know some of us are eager to get back. I know many others are uneasy. We plan to continue recording our services and making them available online for those who want to remain at home until they feel comfortable. I assure you, the church is not going anywhere. The church was never closed. As long as we affirm that Jesus is Lord, we will be the church.

Over the last few months as we have been physically apart, we have been the church. We have given more than 3,000 pounds of food to Fayette Samaritans. We have allocated resources from cancelled events to feed children in our county when the school lunch program was shut down for a week. We have begun the Summer Lunch Program. Groups continued to meet using technology that we may never have thought to use before. We raised more than \$9,000 for the church benevolence fund. We never stopped being the church.

We remember that some things haven't changed. We are all God's children. So as we come back into worship, if things feel weird or off, if you find the masks uncomfortable or a hindrance, if you miss things and think, "Now the church is just being restrictive," I invite you to remember these words about Jesus Christ from Philippians 2:3-4, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."

May we live with this as our guiding light, not just in the business of the church but as followers of Christ Jesus.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. G. Thomas Martin IV". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Grace and Peace,
Rev. Dr. G. Thomas Martin

Guidelines for in-person worship

Worship is a sacred task of the church. As we prepare for worship together, we want to find the joy of Christ without being overly burdensome. However, we know that things will be different. Even though some aspects of worship will change from the last time we all gathered together, the function is no different—praising God, edifying believers, redeeming the world, and enjoying fellowship. Therefore, what follows is not a contract but a covenant. It includes the things you can expect from us as a church, the things we expect from all who join us for in-person worship, and the hopes that we have for the hearts and minds of all the worshippers who gather.

What you can expect from us:

- Clearly marked entry and exits
- Masks for those who may need one
- Hand-sanitation stations
- Every other pew roped off for safety
- Sanctuary cleaned between each service
- Orders of Worship available with words to hymns and responses
- Services at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. in the sanctuary
- Hearing devices cleaned between services

What we expect from worshippers:

- If you feel sick, please stay home.
- Park as far away as possible reserving closer spaces for others. (Lot A may be the closest if you can navigate officer-assisted crossing of Hwy. 54; Lot B will be reserved for seniors and handicapped.)
- Enter the sanctuary from the Narthex (back) only and exit through the front (see map).
- In order to allow time for cleaning and distancing, enter the sanctuary no earlier than 15 minutes before the service.
- Wear a mask at all times in the building. (Bring your own if you have one.)
- Refrain from touching whenever possible, knowing that not everyone has the same comfort level for social interaction.
- Dispose bulletins in bins as you exit.

Hopes for the hearts and minds of those who gather:

- Concern for brothers and sisters in Christ
- Evidence of the Fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, particularly as we all find ourselves in uncharted territory

In an effort to reduce cleaning between services, all entrances except the sanctuary doors will be locked and use of restroom facilities will be limited. Be prepared to use the restroom on an emergency basis. We simply won't be able to give everything the deep cleaning needed at first. As we reopen, we will not have in-person Sunday School or nursery, but we hope to offer those again soon.

If you are not ready to return on June 28, we understand. We will continue to record the services and will make those available so you can still worship with your Fayetteville First UMC family.

Kathe Anderson, Chair, and Trustees

