

# The Return



Bethany United Methodist Church  
1860 Hayes Rd., Gloucester Point VA

## Four Stage Reopening Plan

Healthy Church Team (HCT): Donna Andersen (Trustee, Signage), Judy Burner (Lay Leader), Sandy Fox (Music, Entry), Laura Glaze (Parking, Traffic Flow), Milton Hudgins (Trustee, Ushering), Jane Sterling (Nurse), Pastor Mike Derflinger (worship)

***HCT met with our District Superintendent Rev. Seonyoung Kim by phone on August 3, 2020. This plan was approved at that meeting. Trustees and Council members have reviewed our Plan, and it is good to go.***

## **The Return**

### ***We are Separated.....***

The Coronavirus (COVID-19), declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020, will go down in world history as one of the worst crises we've ever faced. Every aspect of human living has been affected, including our spiritual lives and the life of the Church of Jesus Christ. Crises, whether economic, spiritual, or personal, causes us to shift from the familiar and step into unfamiliar territory.

Our last in-person worship service before the Pandemic was March 8, 2020. It was the weekend of the beginning of Daylight Savings Time, and the Second Sunday of Lent.

As Christians, we turn to God in times of fear and uncertainty as we do in times of happiness and accomplishment. The Good News of the Gospel is built for times such as this, and the people of God pivot as we learn new ways to love God, love our neighbors, and care for ourselves. We desire to stay faithful to Jesus Christ, live in the power of the Holy Spirit, and face the challenges posed by an unseen enemy.

### ***But Not Alone.***

In an effort to continue living out our mission statement *To be a church with Open Hearts, Minds, and Doors*, we have prayerfully put together a FOUR STAGE PLAN for our eventual RETURN. Every effort is being made to ensure that each stage is approved to be in harmony with denominational requirements through our Bishop Rev. Sharma Lewis, our York River District Superintendent Rev. Seonyoung Kim, state and local leadership, medical professionals, The Center of Disease Control (CDC) recommendations, good ole common sense, and the care and safety of our church family and community.

## The Return



<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Open Minds</b>	<b>Blue</b>	<b>Safer at Home</b>
<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Open Hearts</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Present but Distant</b>
<b>Stage 3</b>	<b>Open Doors</b>	<b>Green</b>	<b>Social, Present, but Still Distant</b>
<b>Stage 4</b>	<b>Good to Go!!</b>		

### **Stage 1          Open Minds          Safer at Home**

**Timeline: March 15, 2020 to August 16, 2020 (23 Sundays)**

**Capacity: No in-person worship. Classes, small groups, and ministries meet by ZOOM and other media.**

Church Office is closed. Local church staff may return to work on or before June 15, 2020.

Develop one pre-recorded worship service to broadcast on Facebook, our church website, and YouTube for people to have on Sunday.

Pastor and staff work from home and come into church per personal decision.

Two videos are produced weekly, devotional and encouraging in nature, one for children and one for adults.

Send email blasts via MailChimp to the Bethany Church family (216 on this list).

Develop a post mailing list of local folks who do not text, email, or have Internet or who prefer paper copies of church news and sermons (48 on this list).

Strict physical distancing (six feet or more away from others), mask wearing, and handwashing are maintained throughout the church property.

A Congregational Care Prayer Tree is developed by the Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee for connection, encouragement, prayer, and church news. Callers received training and are given 10-12 families to check in with at least once every two weeks. Youth Fellowship is a distinct group with a Caller. Callers or the persons themselves contact the Pastor with special needs and crises.

## The Return



### Stage One (continued)

### Open Minds

### Safer at Home

The Pastor's Discretionary Fund is available to assist with financial needs and is a touchless ministry.

All ministries and church groups meet at their own discretion and at their own risk. ZOOM or other virtual means is strongly encouraged.

A Healthy Church Team (HCT) met for the first time on July 13<sup>th</sup> to develop a detailed plan to return to in-person sanctuary worship. This plan was emailed to the District Superintendent on July 29, 2020 for her approval and meets ten (10) days in advance notice needed to have our first return in-person worship service.

HCT members will develop their own teams of volunteers and back up plans if someone is unable to be there.

### Stage Two

### Open Hearts

### Present but Distant

**Timeline: August 23, 2020 (tentative) to To Be Decided**

**Capacity: Not over 50% capacity in Sanctuary or Fellowship Hall with physical social distancing (6 feet or more away from others) and masks worn at all times. Other in-person gatherings of 50 or less with social distancing and masks.**

Our HCT recommends that we return to in-person sanctuary worship with one 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, August 23, 2020. The reasons for one 10:00 a.m. are to limit exposure and to keep our regular cleaning schedule. We will evaluate each service and make adjustments as needed. We will also do a summary evaluation after six (6) Sundays which will be after the September 27<sup>th</sup> service.

We will record the 10:00a.m. service, and continue recording services through Stage 2. It should be posted on Monday on our church website, Facebook, and on YouTube.

Our HCT will provide materials for a hand sanitizer station, and a touchless temperature thermometer. HCT will provide gloves only for volunteers. HCT will recruit their own team of volunteers who must meet the health requirements.

Please bring your own mask. HCT will not provide masks.

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### **Stage Two Open hearts (continued) Present but Distant**

*When you come to worship, here's what you can expect:*

#### **Pre-Service Cleaning**

Our Janitorial Team will clean and sanitize our pews, restrooms, doors, and handles on Saturday evening and Sunday evening with COVID-19 approved cleaners.

#### **Parking and Vehicle Traffic Flow**

Laura Glaze is coordinating our parking and vehicle traffic flow before and after worship. We will use our rear parking lot and grass only. Please be mindful of the following:

- Please park so that physical social distancing (six feet or more) is maintained.
- If a vehicle is parked close to you, please allow the necessary time and space for that party to exit/enter their vehicle while maintaining physical social distancing.
- Please put your mask on before you exit your vehicle, and keep it on until you re-enter.

#### **Signage**

Donna Andersen is coordinating indoor and outdoor signage for your safety. For example, instructional signs will be posted on doors and walls.

#### **Entry**

Sandy Fox is coordinating entry into the sanctuary. The Entry Door is the touchless back door with use of the ramp and will be clearly marked.

- A hand sanitizer station will be available. Everyone must sanitize their hands upon entry into the building.
- A contactless temperature scan will be required. If your temperature is 100.3 or below and you meet the criteria on the Health Poster, you may attend worship. Your name will be listed as an attendee. The reason for this is if a person who attends worship develops symptoms of or contracts COVID-19, we are required to phone and inform all attendees.
- No entrance to those with 100.4 degree temperature and above.
- If a person in your family registers a temperature of 100.4 and above, the entire family will be unable to worship that day.
- You will be asked if you have received the enclosed Health Poster, do you understand it, and do you comply with it. You do not need to bring the Health Poster with you.
- A facial covering (mask, bandana, or shield) over the nose and mouth at all times is mandatory for everyone throughout church property.

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### **Stage Two    Open hearts (continued)    Present but Distant**

#### **Seating**

Milton Hudgins is coordinating seating. Families may sit together. Our seating capacity in the narthex, sanctuary, and chancel area is 250. We cannot abide with 50% capacity (125) and practice strict physical social distancing. After speaking with our District Superintendent, and with strict physical social distancing of 6 feet or more away from others, the HCT has decided that we will limit seating to 65 people.

#### **Worship**

For your safety and the health of our community, a person may not attend worship or any gathering where a face covering is required IF the person has

- breathing difficulties
- a suppressed immune system
- chronic lung or kidney disease
- an immunocompromised condition (cancer, stem cell, bone marrow transplant, solid organ transplant, HIV, use of oral or intravenous corticosteroids)
- a temperature of 100.4 and above.
- Any person who does not feel ready to return is encouraged to stay home and continue worshipping online, by television and radio.
- Masking is mandatory throughout the service for everyone.

Pastor Mike Derflinger is responsible for conducting the worship service.

Services in Stage Two will be abbreviated in time and content to keep logistics simpler and reduce the risk of contact and exposure.

Touchless greeting. No physical exchange of greeting (hugs, handshakes, kisses).

There is no singing. You are encouraged to hum and we will worship the Lord in love and gratitude.

Paperless worship. All printed materials will be removed from the sanctuary.

Touchless offering. Offering plates will be placed by the Entry/Exit Door.

No nursery or childcare will be available.

Restrooms are limited to one person at a time. Masks are required on bathroom visits.

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### **Stage Two      Open Hearts (continued)      Present but Distant**

There are no altar flowers.

No coffee fellowship time.

We will use acolytes and liturgists as available.

Water fountains will be turned off.

Doors will be propped open and marked clearly.

No in-person on-site Sunday School on church property. Classes can meet by ZOOM, correspondence, and in homes. Please contact your teacher to see if you are having class.

Holy Communion is allowed in Stage Two. We will continue with first Sunday Communion. Bishop Lewis will send revised Communion guidelines to Pastor Mike and he will share them with HCT.

#### **Exiting**

Milton Hudgins is coordinating Exiting. He will determine the best way, most likely exiting by pew. The Exit Door is the touchless back door with use of the ramp and will be clearly marked.

#### **Post-Service Cleaning**

Our sanctuary will be closed after our worship service. HCT will check to see if any items are left behind; if so, we will call you to pick it up or wait for you to call us. No one else will be allowed in the sanctuary between the end of worship and until the Janitorial Team arrives Sunday evening to clean and sanitize the sanctuary, doors, and restrooms.

## The Return



**Stage Three      Open Doors: Social, Present, But Still Distant**

**Timeline:          To Be Decided**

**Capacity:          To Be Decided                  Return to 8:30 and 11:00 services.**

Build on Stage Three, including recording our 11:00a.m. service.

Consider whether to lengthen worship services, and resume altar flowers.

Continue utilizing Facebook, YouTube, and the church website.

Concerted effort to resume in-person on-site Sunday School, Youth ministry, Children's ministry, and program ministries with face coverings, physical distancing, hygiene, and screening as outlined by Bishop Lewis.

NOTE: We do not know what the particulars of Stage Three will be.

### Phase Four

**Good to Go!!**

**No Date Determined**

We envision a time when we return to a somewhat familiar normalcy with added changes to meet new challenges. What will church be like after a pandemic? What aspects of Christian living will be more important than before, or less important? How will we encourage people in their relationship with Christ, and help them return after a long absence? What does our community need?

We hope **Good to Go!** will include sanctuary seating without restriction, singing, our choir, a children-come-forward children's story, Holy Communion, and being busy for the Lord. Audio/visual upgrades will enhance our worship experience for all generations. We hope that masks and hand sanitizers will be optional and touch greeting will be allowed with discretion.

We look forward to resuming our ministries, fundraisers, fellowship, special services and times to connect with our community.

As you prayerfully consider whether or not to return to in-person worship at this time, we pray God's blessings on you and your family, the body of Christ at Bethany, our community, our nation and world.

-The Healthy Church Team (HCT)