



KIRK OF KILDAIRE PRESBYTERIAN  
CARY, NORTH, CAROLINA

May 19, 2020

Dear Family and Friends of the Kirk,

We are living in a strange season at the Kirk... an “in-between time.” But God’s people have been there many times... think Wilderness journey, think the Saturday between Good Friday and Easter, think of how the early church was waiting for Christ to return. We still do.

The in-between time is the time when we wait. We wait with grief, with uncertainty and with a desire to come home, be together, and share fellowship. But we want to do so in a way that loves neighbor and looks out for the most vulnerable among us. We want to responsible members of our community. We want to open up the church responsibly. But there are so many hard decisions to make. The Session has wrestled with those decisions and approved a “Kirk Comeback Plan” that looks for a path to reopening. As you might expect, there are many, many details that go into such a plan. We also know such a plan is open to revision as information and circumstances change. As the plan is rolled out, we will assess where we are and pay attention to the best information we have regarding health trends and safety practices we receive. We ask for your prayers, patience and support as we move forward.

At the end of this letter you will see a summary of the first two phases of the plan. I am not including the third phase here because that is the phase that is most uncertain at this time. By the way, our phases align with the phased timeline from our state government.

**But a couple of things can be said that apply to the first two phases in general:**

- 1) High Risk Individuals (defined as those 65 and older and those with underlying conditions) **are strongly encouraged to stay home.** We cannot emphasize this enough. Please, if you are vulnerable to the virus do not come to the building or gatherings. Stay home and enjoy the live stream. Join in groups via Zoom. We say this for your health and for the health of others. We love you enough to tell you to stay home! We want to continue to fellowship with you for years to come!
- 2) **Anyone entering the building or gathering for activities outside the church shall wear face coverings and practice social distancing.** Masks are a great way to show your love for neighbor since they are worn for the protection of others. When you wear a mask you are showing your love for those in the office, those using the building, and those gathering for worship and other outside activities. This applies to

all ages. The only exception will be during worship for worship leaders who will remain distant from congregants.

- 3) An assumption about worship: **the primary worship will remain in the form of live-streaming.** When we gather for outside worship, we are recording a service for the live-streaming. We are “live-streaming” a recorded service at 11am. That will remain the main service.)
- 4) Cleaning protocols and practices must be in place before opening to any church groups. **Each group using the building must have a representative present at the training in order for the group to be approved for usage.** This is supplemental to the cleaning protocols put in place by Building and Grounds but insures rooms are left as clean as possible.

In closing, I want to thank the many leaders and teams who thought carefully about the proposals for re-opening. I want to thank the Session for honest and hard conversations as we sought what is best for the Kirk. These are challenging and difficult issues. Where we have disagreed or pushed one another, it has been done with a spirit of grace, love and collegiality. “How” we respond reflects much about the faith we share. May we be guided by Paul’s instructions to the Colossians:

*As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. <sup>13</sup> Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord<sup>[f]</sup> has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

<sup>14</sup> *Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

<sup>15</sup> *And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. (3:12-15a)*

In faith, hope and love,

Jody

## **THE “KIRK COMEBACK” PLAN FOR RE-OPENING FOR PHASE ONE AND TWO-SUMMARY and HIGHLIGHTS**

*Email the Kirk office for the 16 page version: churchoffice@kirkofofkildaire.org*

### **ASSUMPTIONS:**

- We will seek to love our neighbors, look out for the most vulnerable, and look out for the common good.
- We will follow the guidance and guidelines of our governing authorities and public health authorities. We will develop guidelines that are aligned with our Insurance Company’s requirements to limit liability to the full extent possible.
- We will review, revise and adjust plans as information and circumstances require
- Cleaning protocols and practices must be in place before opening to any church groups. Each group using the building must have a representative present at the training in order for the group to be approved for usage.

### ***PHASE ONE current phase***

- High risk individuals (defined as anyone 65 and older and those with underlying conditions) are strongly encouraged to stay in place.
- Building is open only for essential services (online worship, feeding program, preparation of the building, essential staff activity)
- \* Anyone entering the building or gathering for outside worship or activities, shall wear face coverings and shall practice social distancing. (Worship leaders are not asked to wear face coverings while leading worship)
- \* Minimum of 6 feet social distancing between family units.
- \* Any part of the outdoor worship service or other activities that might be an opportunity for touching should be eliminated.
- Follow Cleaning protocols as established by the Building and Grounds Team

### **WORSHIP in Phase One:**

- Choirs/Music: Limited to small groups in compliance with safety protocols. Allow outdoor service with social distancing. (Current plans are to offer limited outdoor worship in June at 9am, weather permitting. No indoor worship even on rainy days. At 11am we will livestream the recording of the 9am worship)
- Life rituals (baptisms, weddings, funerals): Kept to fewer than 10 in attendance.

### ***PHASE TWO* : Phase One Policies remain in place with the following changes:**

- \* Limited use of rooms allowed. Some will be closed for use and will be posted.
- \* Resume regular office functions with health and safety practices in place. Those who come to the office remain outside the church office door. No meetings in small offices. Telework is still encouraged.
- Meetings allowed in spaces according to government guidelines and cleaning procedures after training in cleaning protocols.
- No childcare available

**WORSHIP in Phase Two:**

- Continue livestream worship as the primary form of worship. Early Phase two will worship outside.
- Follow new cleaning protocols as established by Building and grounds.

**Later Phase Two (July at earliest):**

- In person worship in the Sanctuary **if and when approved by the Session** with limits as government guidelines and social distancing allows. Use the Gathering space as overflow. We may return to live-stream only worship if necessary. (Session will review at June 14<sup>th</sup> Session meeting)
- If and when we gather for in person worship, there will be appropriate protocols in place as described in the document. For example, social distancing indicated by marked off pews, use of masks continues, etc...) Any part of the worship service or other activities that might be an opportunity for touching should be eliminated.
- Music and singing: Small, well-spaced ensembles of choir members (and others) sing the hymns and other musical offerings, congregation does not sing. (but may hum!)
- Life rituals (baptisms, weddings, funerals): limited as required by government and health guidelines.