

SPECIAL EDITION of June 30, 2020: PREPARATION FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP

Dear Hamden Plains Church community,

We resume public worship outdoors this Sunday, July 5th at 9 a.m.
Please read this in its entirety. It will answer most questions and help manage expectations for (a) those planning to attend in-person public worship and (b) those continuing to use an on-line worship option. This letter will be mailed by U.S. Postal Service to those without e-mail.

Public worship protocols: Our protocols were developed by the New York (United Methodist) Annual Conference and agreed to by our church leadership in our reopening application approved by our District Superintendent. They include:

- Face masks must be worn by all attendees except children under 2 years old. A face mask will be provided if a worshipper forgets to bring one or is a guest unaware of this requirement.
- Social/physical distancing of six feet or more must be maintained from other worshippers excepting family groups.
- Hand-sanitizers must be used by all worshippers.
- “Touchless” worship bulletins, offerings and Communion will be provided.
- Singing is prohibited. Worshippers may hum with the song leader, who will be positioned at distance to avoid potential COVID-19 spread.
- Those who are sick must stay home.

As we know from experience in states that have not initially followed these protocols, the transmission of COVID-19 has increased exponentially. Therefore, with the health and safety of our worshippers as paramount, **WORSHIP WILL END IMMEDIATELY IF ANY WORSHIPPER DECLINES TO HONOR THESE PROTOCOLS.**

In addition, those who are in **high-risk categories** are strongly urged to stay home. Both high-risk and sick persons are encouraged to worship using an on-line option.

Public worship logistics: Worship will be in the portion of the parking lot behind the storage shed and surrounded by woods. **Worshippers are encouraged to arrive early, before the 9 a.m. start of worship, to park and become acclimated.** Worshippers may **participate in chairs** or **remain seated in cars** as follows:

- Seated worshippers are asked to park in the portion of the lot near Dixwell Avenue and walk to the shaded area where seats will be. If you have a portable chair please bring it. If not, metal folding chairs will be provided.
- Cars worshippers are asked to park (a) immediately next to the church by Church Street, (b) by the handicapped ramp or (c) across from the ramp under the trees. **Exiting cars for any reason requires a face mask.**
- Order of service programs may be either accessed on-line or picked up in print at the station provided.

- Offerings, both regular tithes and offerings and Noisy Offering, may be left in the marked stations provided.
- Holy Communion (July 5th and August 2nd) may be picked up at the marked station provided.
- Restrooms will be available. Only one person of each gender at a time (or one parent and a child), monitored by a Worship Host, will be admitted. We encourage you to use the bathroom before coming to worship.
- Specific prayer intentions will **only be received in advance**, either by e-mailing them to brianbodt@sbcglobal.net or leaving a voicemail at 203.248.4654 **no later than Saturday evening**.
- **If it rains, public worship will be cancelled.** Check your e-mail, church telephone (203.248.4654) or website (www.hamdenplainsumc.com) to see if a cancellation notice is posted.
- If worship is cancelled it **will still be recorded and posted**.

Public worship format: Our worship will follow our regular format as much as possible but without Passing the Peace, children’s message or Fellowship Time.

On-line worship options: Some may not know that our services since March 29 have (a) been prerecorded on the prior Thursday and posted to view on Sunday and (b) that George Joseph, our program editor and producer, is a **volunteer**. In many ways, resuming public worship is **more** work for both staff and volunteers. Nevertheless, we believe this is the right step for Hamden Plains Church now.

Previously, the only on-line worship option has been to watch prerecorded worship. Now, you may join the service (a) “live” through ZOOM, (b) audio only “live” through ZOOM, or (c) view the recorded service as you have since March 29. Since George is a volunteer with a family for whom Sunday is a family day, recorded worship will not be posted at least until 7 p.m. on Sunday and may be as late as 7 p.m. on Monday.

“ZOOM” access is not provided here. “ZOOM-bombing” is people intent on doing harm by disrupting ZOOM meetings with vulgar, racist or other hateful speech and images. This happened to a neighboring United Methodist church. **If you wish to be invited to ZOOM worship**, please contact George Joseph at 203.675.3595 or hpumc.social.media@gmail.com.

In conclusion: By sending this communication prior to Sunday and subsequent to many prior communications on how public worship will be conducted, we hope to have answered most questions. If questions remain, please feel free to reach us at our contacts below. We look forward to worship with you, in-person or on-line.

Yours in Christ’s service,

Pastor Brian

The Rev. Dr. Brian R. Bodt
Pastor

Holly

Holly O’Brien
Worship Chair

George

George Joseph
Program Producer

