

Statement about Reopening – Bishop Peggy A. Johnson

Greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have been asked recently about re-opening our churches and want to be clear about the following:

1. The ministry of our churches has always been considered “essential services.” However, in recent months health officials and our governors have asked that we observe strict orders that have prevented in-person worship. This was for the sake of health and safety and it was the prudent thing to do. Re-opening is now being cautiously permitted by our state officials.
2. Re-opening guidelines issued by the state are still our best practices and should be followed in the interest of health and safety for all, especially our older congregants and those with health issues that put them at a higher risk.
3. The Board of Trustees and the pastor should draft a plan for reopening their church and do so with the guidelines for safety in mind. These are posted on our conference website. Preparing the building for cleaning and creating a way to spread people out around the pews is essential.
4. It is always acceptable to continue to remain closed until the church decides it is safe and ready.
5. It is advisable that on-line options continue even when the church re-opens to accommodate those who are not able to attend and to continue to the outreach.
6. Remain prayerful and in communication with church members as these plans are unfolded. Disagreements about the timing of re-opening and the enforcement of protocols are best prevented when everyone is informed.

I hold all of you constantly in my prayers as you continue the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in these challenging times. Your ministry with the poor is exemplary. Your faithful worship has lifted the hearts of people to the Lord.