



Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church

Serving Christ in the Heart of Detroit

Saturday, June 20

Dear Members and Friends of JAPC,

Paul invited the church in Ephesus to *lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* In the coming time we will need to be humble and patient with ongoing changes to our patterns of life. The church will also need to make effort to sustain our congregation as one body as the timing of church members participating in face-to-face worship and ministry will be as diverse as God made us.

On Wednesday, June 17, the Session of Jefferson Avenue Presbyterian Church *approved a timeline for returning to the church building for staff functions on Monday, June 22 and for in-person worship in the sanctuary on Sundays beginning July 12.* Along with this letter is an Executive Summary of the Session's extensive plan. The summary is designed to inform the congregation of expectations and precautions that relate to those who participate in physical ministries. Please read this important document.

Some important points to consider are these: First, the church will re-enter the building with protocols and guidelines to allow for the safest possible use of the building. This is not a return to church as it was before the pandemic. Second, while the staff will be working in the building, it remains closed to visitors. The church office will be available by appointment only with masks and distancing.

In the planning and preparation the Session has done to begin physical and in-person worship and ministries again, the congregation and all participants will need to be adaptive, responsive, and attentive. Parts of our planning may need to change or adjust as we consider new or changing realities that could not be anticipated. In all that will come, we are called to be faithful to God and to one another as we live as the church together.

Part of being faithful to the body of Christ also means that we understand that the risk for face-to-face participation is different for all people. Session and I seek to make the church's worship and ministries assessable for people who will not be physically present. Please reach out if there is a way we can do this better, I would appreciate hearing from you.

Session has done this work to guide the church to take the steps into re-entry. The character of Session in doing so has been prayerful, non-anxious, and hopeful as they seek the well-being of the church while anticipating when we could share worship in our sanctuary. Worship is the

heart of our identity and lives of faith. The Session was thoughtful. They asked hard questions and considered the implications of possible decisions, despite not having all the answers. I am grateful for their effort and it is an effort that will continue as this is a first step. Session and staff will continue to monitor conditions as best we can to make changes to the church's worship and ministries as necessary.

I believe that as we do this difficult and joyful ministry together, Paul's invitation to the Ephesians are good words to guide us. I believe we will know God's presence as we bear one another Christ's love, as we prayer, support, and nurture one another in Christ's love. May we be guided by the wisdom of the Spirit to see what God is doing among God's church, which is to say, body of Christ, which includes all of us.

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Nickel", written in a cursive style.

Rev. Matt Nickel