



We aspire to be beacons of God's love and truth ...

March 25, 2022

*Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness!
Come into his presence with singing!*

- Psalm 100:1-2 (NRSV)

Dear Members and Friends of FPC Moorestown,

Each week we gather as Presbyterians in the Sanctuary, Miller Commons and via live stream to give "all glory and honor, praise and thanksgiving to the holy triune God" (W-1.0101). Worship is central to our identity as Presbyterians. Through the act of corporate worship, we respond to the love and grace bestowed upon us by God and as revealed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Worship is the heartbeat of our church!

Over the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the way we express our love of God in worship. After spending a year worshipping via live stream, we began gathering in person. This too looked different; we wore masks, practiced social distancing, greeted one another with fist bumps and elbows instead of hugs and handshakes, celebrated communion with pre-packaged wafers and juice, and did not sing. We remained resilient - we continued to worship - a pandemic could not stifle our heart for worship.

During this time, Session has remained vigilant, spending countless hours in prayer and conversation, in an effort to keep the members and guests of FPC Moorestown safe. More recently, Session established protocols for worship and facility usage corresponding to the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) COVID-19 Activity Level Index (CALI) and took into consideration the protocols enacted by the Moorestown Board of Education and surrounding school districts.

On March 24, the DOH released its most recent CALI score of MODERATE. With an overall decrease in COVID cases in recent weeks and a Burlington County vaccination rate of about 75%, we anticipate our region, South West, will continue to oscillate between LOW and MODERATE over the next few months.

With that said, it gives me great joy to announce the ***return of congregational singing*** at First Presbyterian Church of Moorestown – ***effective immediately!*** At its stated March meeting, Session approved two motions related to COVID-19 protocols:

continued

1. Temporarily amended MODERATE CALI score protocols to allow for maskless congregational and choral singing through April 26, 2022. Session will continue to consult the weekly CALI and Center for Disease Control reports to monitor the pandemic and re-evaluate this amendment at its next stated meeting, April 26th.
2. Established LOW CALI score protocols. When the South West CALI region is LOW for two consecutive weeks there will be no restrictions — we are back to normal. This includes unmasked congregational and choral singing in worship, serving food and refreshments, signing Letters of Well Wishing, and how we celebrate and administer the sacrament of Holy Communion.

Please continue to pray for our church leadership in the coming weeks as we monitor the temporary amendment to our MODERATE protocols, and that the recent downward trend in COVID cases continues.

Thank you for your faithfulness and support in these complicated times. I look forward to worshipping with you and hearing your voices in song!

In Christ,

Wes

Wesley R. Allen; Associate Pastor