

BUILDING RE-OPENING TASK FORCE

January 30, 2021

Presbytery of Newark

Prayers that you are well and that all around you are healthy in this new year! Sadly, Covid -19 continues to impact our lives and our world. Shortly after celebrating the new year, Governor Murphy and New Jersey Department of Health announced that a new strain of Coronavirus (more virulent and highly infectious) has impacted the Northern New Jersey area. We now know the the South African strain is in the United States.

It is worth noting that vaccines are now available in a very limited capacity. Hopefully, broader access to the vaccine in the near future will finally put this pandemic behind us. Nevertheless, at this time the number infections in this state continue to rise indicating that this pandemic is not over. If you are among the fortunate few to have received the protection of vaccination, please remain patient and respectful of those that have not been granted similar access. Protections that have become the norm during this pandemic should not be abandoned until vaccinations are increasingly available to the general public.

It is the opinion that unless and until the public health crisis among us is addressed, we will continue to experience economic challenge. We understand our churches are experiencing hardship at lost rental revenue and decreased giving from members and friends.

However, the Task-Force is making following recommendation that all buildings remain closed until **June 30, 2021**. We encourage Session to provide virtual worship until such time as the weather will permit outdoor worship services. Worship should be outdoors and implement with social distancing.

The Task Force will meet again in the early spring to review and make further recommendations. We believes caution is still the best action to take.

Faithfully,

Elder Warren C. McNeill
Stated Clerk

Rev. Maria Crompton
Elmwood United Presbyterian Church

Elder Carlos Montegudo, MD, MPH
Bloomfield Church on the Green

Rev. Dan Martian
Presbyterian Church of Livingston

Elder Tia Goss Sawhney, DrPH FSA, MAAA
First Presbyterian Church Newark