

SHEPHERDSTOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

P.O. Box 268 • Shepherdstown WV 25443 • 304-876-6466

May 26, 2020

Dear SPC Members and Friends,

As our state and country begin to reopen, the Session is continuing to discern the best path forward for SPC. As our collective ministry becomes even more essential, the time calls for us to be clear about the challenge we face.

The facts are that the virus remains a real threat and public health officials predict a long trajectory for this pandemic. Many in our congregation—those over 60 and/or who have an underlying health condition—are at higher risk for contracting this disease with the most serious outcomes. Protecting the well-being and safety of our faith community is a top priority.

While the Session will continue to evaluate when we can safely reopen the building, it has determined that, for the reasons stated above, the building will remain closed and Sunday worship and small group gatherings will continue on-line at least through the end of summer and most likely beyond. Please be assured that we are committed to keeping our virtual doors open and the Session recently approved technology investments to support these efforts.

As we move forward, the Session has adopted the following guiding principles for discernment and decision-making during this pandemic:

- **Safety.** Keep people safe and act in ways that minimize the risk and spread of infection.
- **Data Driven.** Base decisions on sound scientific evidence and advice from national and international organizations with medical and epidemiological expertise.
- **Flexibility.** Be ready and willing to respond and adapt to changing conditions.
- **Opportunity.** Be creative and willing to reimagine and re-form how we worship and serve.

We recognize this is a difficult time and that we long to be together in ways that are familiar to us. How we faithfully continue to “be church” in an ongoing pandemic is a challenge we face individually and as a faith community. It is also an opportunity for us to find new ways to live into our values of radical hospitality, holistic spirituality and engaged compassion. While there are no easy answers, with Pastor Gusti’s leadership, prayer, and our commitment to each other, we will move through this difficult time.

Church is not a building—**church is us.** Church happens whenever and however we gather. And so, the church—our church—continues to be an open and vibrant community of faith.

We send hope and blessings to you all,



Lois C. Spreen
Clerk of Session