



The people of  
**Hinton Avenue United Methodist Church**  
*Seek Christ, Serve Christ, Share Christ*  
*in Belmont and Beyond*



October 26, 2020

Sisters and brothers,

Grace to you, and peace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. It has been far too long since I have seen most of you face to face, and I realize that it has been many months since we have shared news congregation-wide. Life during the COVID-19 pandemic has taken on a bizarre new routine, and time seems to stretch on alarmingly. I hope that you are safe and well and that if it were otherwise you would let me know.

Although there have been minor changes to the Virginia Conference's Technical Assistance Manual, we remain in Stage 2 under Conference rules. These restrictions allow drive-in or in-person worship if congregations choose and can support protocols to ensure everyone's health and safety. **Thus far, our Healthy Church Team and Church Council have felt online-only worship safest for all. However, we are now considering a return to in-person worship in time for Advent and would appreciate your feedback.**

First, everyone's health and safety are paramount to us and we believe that our congregation is largely in a high-risk category. Any decision we take will be carefully considered, receive approval from our District Superintendent, and retain the option for joining us by telephone or internet. We encourage everyone to consider their own situation and comfort level. Furthermore, the safety measures we take will be strictly enforced and non-negotiable. If we violate these covenants with one another, the service must end immediately, and everyone return home.

It is important to give a sense of what we can expect during in-person worship. For everyone's safety, we would take the following steps:

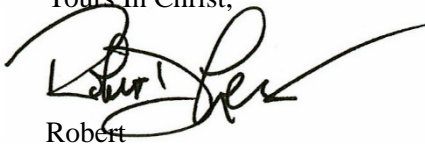
- Please always allow at least 6 feet of distance from others
- Please put on a mask before leaving your vehicle and remove it only when back in your vehicle
- If you have a temperature of 100.4°F or more or are sick without a fever, please stay home
- We will conduct health screenings and gather contact information at the door each week
- 50 people will be our maximum capacity
- All words and worship materials will be on-screen only
- The offering will be received in a drop-off box near the exit
- If you have difficulty keeping your mouth and nose covered appropriately, fellow worshipers will assist or remind you how to do so
- We will have only instrumental or pre-recorded music during the service (no in-person singing).
- Restroom occupancy will be one at a time. Please wipe down all surfaces you touch after use.
- Please greet each other with a smile and a wave. Handshakes and hugs are for family units ONLY.
- The congregation will be dismissed by rows to ensure distancing as we exit
- Sanctuary and restroom surfaces and high-touch areas will be cleaned and disinfected before and after the service
- We will continue to abstain from Holy Communion at this time

These are not our ideal circumstances for worship, and several folks have remarked how they enjoy seeing all of each other's faces unmasked on Zoom. We have also enjoyed the ability to sing hymns in our own homes. We are the Body of Christ, though, and long to be together. There are reasonable precautions we can take to minimize risk and would like to offer options to those willing to take them. The requirements given to us by our Conference leadership may meet disagreement, but we are a connectional people and following these rules is an essential way of loving our neighbors at this time. Your Healthy Church Team is seeking the best possible path for our congregation and values your perspective and ideas.

Before we make any decisions, would you kindly complete the simple form below and return it by mail to the church office? Your feedback will shape our discussion and we look forward to sharing news with you soon.

In the meantime, I would like to remind you that in addition to online means of joining our Sunday School and Worship, **you can also take part simply by dialing an ordinary landline telephone.** Details are enclosed with this letter.

Yours In Christ,



Robert

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## **We welcome your feedback!**

Please let the Healthy Church Team know that you have received and read this letter by responding to the following questions and returning in the provided self-addressed, stamped envelope. Take all the space you need and include additional pages if necessary.

- **Have you been attending worship online?** Y / N
- **Would you consider attending an in-person worship service at this time?** Y / N
- **What concerns would you have about returning to in person worship?**
  
- **What questions would you like us to answer about returning to in-person worship?**
  
- **Is there anything else you would like us to know?**

**It is important that we remain gathered in spirit  
Join us by computer, mobile device, or telephone.**

**Virtual Choir Wednesdays 6:30 – 8 pm**

To join the Zoom meeting, visit <https://bit.ly/3bRQRTE>  
or dial **1 (646)876-9923** and enter Meeting ID: **494 767 0409 #**  
**Password: 862611**

**Sunday School Sundays 9:45-10:30 am**

To join the Zoom meeting, visit <https://bit.ly/341reOZ>  
or dial **1 (646)876-9923** and enter Meeting ID: **883 7890 0974 #**  
**Password: 388015**

**You can join us for Worship on Sundays at 11 am**

To join the Zoom meeting, visit <https://bit.ly/2JAKOGW>  
or dial **1 (646)876-9923** and enter Meeting ID: **142 714 820 #**  
**Password: 436770**

Or view on Facebook Live: [www.facebook.com/hintonaveumc/live](http://www.facebook.com/hintonaveumc/live)

**Joining a meeting by phone only**

- 1. Dial 1 (646) 876-9923 (check your local phone provider for long distance charges).**
- 2. You will be prompted to enter the meeting ID - the nine (9) digit ID provided to you by the host, followed by #.**
- 3. If the meeting has not already started and join before host is not enabled, you will be prompted to enter the host key to start the meeting, or to press # to wait if you are participant.**
- 4. You will be prompted to enter your unique participant ID. Press # to skip.**

**Phone controls for participants**

The following commands can be entered via DTMF tones using your phone's dial pad while in a Zoom meeting:

- \*6 - Toggle mute/unmute
- \*9 - Raise hand