

Our Hope and Plan for Re-gathering

In its guidance to PCUSA churches in Central Texas, Mission Presbytery sent out a document that outlines a phased approach toward gathering again in church buildings for in-person worship. Phase 1 states: Once your region has had **14 days of declining cases**, you may resume in-person worship, weddings and funerals with *strict* social distancing protocols (sitting every-other pew, six feet apart, no hand shake, passing of the peace, etc.). *Continue to strongly discourage vulnerable individuals from attending.* Phase 2 states: Once your region has had **28 days of declining cases** without resurgence, you may resume in-person worship, weddings and funerals with *moderate* social distancing protocols. *Strongly discourage vulnerable individuals from attending.* Phase 3 states: Once your region has had **42 days of declining cases** without resurgence, you may resume in-person worship, weddings and funerals with *limited* social distancing protocols. *Strongly discourage vulnerable individuals from attending.*

The number of new cases reported in Austin and Travis County have been trending downward since August 18. This means that we have had approximately one month of declining cases. In addition, the 7 day average of new hospital admissions for Austin and Travis County has been trending downward as well: on July 30, that number was at 38, which brought us into Stage 3 precautions; on September 14, that number was at 15. The number to reach Stage 2 precautions is 10 or fewer hospital admissions for the 7 day average. Our area is moving in the right direction! If there is not a spike in new cases or hospital admissions as a result of the Labor Day holiday or school openings, Austin and Travis County may move into Stage 2 precautions by the end of September.

The Session determined that, **once Travis County announces we have moved from Stage 3 precautions to Stage 2 precautions**, it will be safe to offer a slow, phased, reservation only, return to worship for up to 15 people. At that time, we will release information about the ways in which re-gathering for in-person worship will occur and the safety measures we have in place. Meanwhile, we will continue to worship virtually as we have been since this began. We will continue to have meetings, Sunday School, bible studies and other gatherings via Zoom. We will continue to be the church in this place – the Presbyterian Church of Lake Travis set loose in the world!