



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
PITTSBURGH EPISCOPAL AREA

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE
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CYNTHIA MOORE-KOIKOI
RESIDENT BISHOP

RENEE MIKELL
ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP

May 6, 2020

The Honorable Thomas Wolf
Governor of Pennsylvania
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf,

Greetings from Bishop Peggy Johnson, Bishop Jeremiah Park, and Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi. Together we provide pastoral and temporal leadership for the over 2,000 United Methodist Churches and approximately 400,000 United Methodist Church members in the state of Pennsylvania.

The people of the United Methodist Church in Pennsylvania have been praying for you and your staff during this challenging time in our state and world. Your bold leadership has been a blessing to the people of Pennsylvania and has helped us to work together to flatten the curve.

Thank you for designating churches as life sustaining businesses. As bishops we are extremely grateful for all of the clear and timely mandates, guidelines, and information you and Dr. Levine have provided us regarding how life sustaining businesses should operate safely.

We are aware that you have been receiving pressure, particularly from some in the faith community, to reopen the state completely and/or make even more exceptions for churches, temples, and mosques. As bishops of the United Methodist Church we stand with you in making the unpopular, but prudent decisions that help to keep the citizens of this great state safe during this pandemic. We support keeping restrictions on church gatherings for as long as the science indicates those restrictions are needed.

Because of the cultural realities of church gatherings, it will be difficult for our churches to implement safe practices as restrictions are lifted. Therefore, each of us is providing guidance for the reopening of the churches in our area that is consistent with government and public health guidelines.

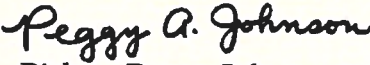
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Attached you will find an example from the Western Pennsylvania Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. We are thankful for the ways in which your directives have helped us provide clarity. We affirm that we consider ourselves to be partners with our government and health officials.

Again, thank you for your leadership. If there are additional ways in which we can be supportive of your leadership, please let us know.

Peace and blessings,


Bishop Peggy Johnson
Eastern Conference


Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi
Western Pennsylvania Conference


Bishop Jeremiah Park
Susquehanna Conference

attachment