

## **“When are we going to re-open?”...**

Is the question that we all ask and hear often and is foremost on everyone’s mind.

A task force consisting of nine people representing different groups and committees of GPC has been meeting virtually on ZOOM each week since May 30<sup>th</sup>. The sole purpose of the group is to assist the Session in making the difficult decision of when and how to reopen GPC for worship in the building. We are exploring other creative ways we can be church-ed even if we are not together in the sanctuary and how, in the meantime, we can continue to do God’s work in the world.

While for some people this may seem like an easy decision, if taken seriously and studiously it is anything but. There are numerous issues that need to be considered including regulations from the Federal, State and County agencies, Church organizations, Safety organizations and so on. Once we started to investigate this situation, we were overwhelmed with the amount of references and directives to be considered and implemented prior to any opening of our building.

The committee presented a preliminary report to Session at its June 16<sup>th</sup> meeting and recommended that, for the time being, the church remain closed and that no outside organizations be permitted to use the building. There are many obstacles to re-opening such as how to do proper disinfection after each use of a room or meeting place, safe social distancing, occupancy limits, vulnerability of members and guests, along with a myriad of other factors that have to be fully taken into account.

We request your patience and ask that you keep the Session and the Task Force in your prayers as we continue to look forward to re-opening sometime in the future. We are also looking at how other churches are re-inventing the worshipping experience and will diligently work towards a successful and definitive conclusion as soon as possible even as we prepare to welcome our new pastor, the Rev. Laura Bachmann.