



May 22, 2020

Pastors, Lay Ministers and Lay Members of the Churches of the California-Nevada Conference,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord, Christ Jesus.

This letter comes to you in response to President Trump's announcement earlier today in which he stated that places of worship should be opened this weekend. He threatened to override the work of Governors as they strive to keep us safe if they disagreed with him.

While I too aspire to see our churches open again, I believe you join me in aspiring to keep people safe and alive in this pandemic above all things.

I am grateful for the leadership of Governors Gavin Newsom and Steve Sisolak, who have worked diligently to lead the states where we serve with critical information and guidance in this pandemic. They have worked with health and science experts including the CDC to help us all gain understanding of this pandemic and knowledge as we attempt to take care of our families, our congregations and our communities. It has made common sense to me to seek expert guidance as we face a health crisis like we have never faced before.

Throughout this time of COVID-19, our conference staff and I with the help of pastors and lay leaders from throughout the conference have attempted to provide [protocols](#) – steps to be taken and observed – to help us weather the storm created by the pandemic we are living in.



**Episcopal Office**

(916) 374-1510

[bishopmc@calnevumc.org](mailto:bishopmc@calnevumc.org)

**CA-NV Annual Conference**

1350 Halyard Drive

West Sacramento, CA 95691

(916) 374-1500

[www.cnumc.org](http://www.cnumc.org)

Just yesterday we posted protocols for [Drive-In church gatherings](#) and for [church Preschools](#) and other such educational programs that meet in our churches. I hope you found them helpful.

We have also been working on protocols for when it may be responsibly possible to re-open our church buildings for worship services. Two days ago, I was part of a small group of religious leaders, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim, who were invited to consult with Governor Newsom's staff on protocols they are developing for this very purpose. They shared their lengthy and comprehensive protocols and asked for our advice. Had they clearly spoken to the issues we face as we consider re-opening our worship services? What had they forgotten that needed to be considered? We had a robust conversation.

This afternoon I was notified that protocols for safely re-opening buildings for worship services will be released in California early next week. These state protocols will assist us in finalizing our protocols. We are also in constant watch for Nevada protocols.

Already some of you have reached out to me or your district superintendents to inquire whether in light of President Trump's announcement, we are required to open up our church buildings this weekend. You have expressed concern about not being ready and not feeling safe.

The answer is No.

Our churches and Conference and District offices will open again when we can safely do so.

We will release protocols for re-opening our church buildings next week; protocols that will need to be implemented and certified by district superintendents before re-opening. We hope to have these protocols ready to send to you by next Thursday. Look for them in our Conference [Instant Connection](#). We will send them forth on every communications platform we have.

Thank you, friends, for your good and faithful work in this pandemic. My heart overflows with the joy I feel in knowing the many ways you have stretched and given of yourselves to be the people of God in these days of illness and death.

I am praying for you and working with you. Above all, God is with us.

Your Sister in Christ,