**Should I return to the building or continue “Virtual Worship”?**

The Covid-19 virus continues to disrupt our lives, forcing us to face questions we never even considered in the past. I suggest we each look at these questions prayerfully and carefully, understanding our personal risks.

**Am I at increased risk?**

The Covid-19 is not an equal opportunity pathogen. It affects some groups of patients much more seriously that others. Experience now tells us that each person must look at their own list of risk factors as we begin returning to normal activities.

1. People **over 65** have a much higher risk of serious illness, hospitalization and death than any of the younger age groups.
2. **Hypertension** (high blood pressure) seems to make a person more susceptible to contracting the virus.
3. Underlying **lung disease** or chronic breathing difficulties, no matter what your age, make a person much more likely to need a ventilator if they become infected with subsequently higher death rates. Examples include, but are not limited to COPD, asthma and Congestive Heart failure.
4. People with any underlying **heart disease** have a greater risk.
5. **Immune compromise or suppression** make your body much less likely to resist the virus and less able to fight it if you get sick.
* **Chemotherapy** can cause immune compromise in its most critical form
* **Biological medicines** like Enbrel, Remicade and Humira and several more used for treatment of Rheumatiod Arthritis, Crohn’s Disease, Ulcerative Colitis, Psoriasis, Ankylosing Spondylitis and several more diseases, suppress your immune system and can hide early illness by limiting fever and other symptoms.
* Any disease requiring **chronic cortisone** or prednisone therapy also can limit your bodies ability to fight infection.
* **Anti-rejection drugs** suppress the immune system to prevent rejection of a transplant and make you very endangered by the Covid-19 virus.

Look carefully at the factors that are a part of your life. Multiple factors tend to greatly expand your risk beyond simple addition. Each of us is extremely anxious to be back with our family, but if you fall in the above categories, be patient. Come back when the risk is reduced and continue now to be a part of the virtual assembly.

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Endorsed by the Una Elders