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## **Rhode Island State Council of Churches and the Rhode Island Bible Society**

October 30, 2020

To ALL Communities of Faith,

In Partnership with the State of Rhode Island's Office of the Governor and the RI Dept of Health we want to provide you with important information to arm you with the power to help the people in our state. It is our goal, together, to make conditions safer in houses of worship.

As you know, the surges in cases of Covid-19 are rising around the nation and that includes RI. You also know people who are having informal gatherings with no masks. Because we are called to be concerned for one another. Wisconsin didn't respond quickly enough... let's learn from this and make our changes NOW!

We have been getting comfortable but it is a little too soon. Worship services are STRONGLY encouraged to resume virtually for 2 weeks. We thought that baby showers, weddings, and sports events were safer, but not yet. We need you to pull back and celebrate with those you reside with a bit longer. Keep your circle of people you interact with very small.

For funerals, the number of attendees must be low, masks worn and distances maintained. And before and after gatherings cannot happen with those who don't live in the same household. The trends are showing that people who gather in religious gatherings in RI are showing to be 13-30 cases each week!

We need to minimize any opportunities for the transmission of Covid to occur...

### **WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?**

- Make a list of 10 people you NEED to see and only be around them
- Wear a mask with anyone who does NOT live in our household
- Wear a mask for 1-on-1 meetings when in person
- Stand and sit distant from one another
- Go Straight Home – avoid standing together talking before and after services and events

We know that religious gatherings were just beginning to gather in person again, but if we back up a bit now before things worsen, it WILL make a difference for the better. Let's get back on the right track!

Sincerely,  
Rev. Chontell Nelson Washington  
*Interim Executive Minister*  
Rhode Island State Council of Churches