A Public Statement of the Philadelphia Baptist Association

We are the oldest continuing community of Baptist Believers in the United States of America founded in 1707. We continue our tradition of speaking out and providing service in times of national crisis.

Concerning the reopening of the US economy in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge congregations to model the love of Christ by speaking out for a science and public health-based reentry process that strengthens our economy without compromising the safety of the most vulnerable in society.

We recommend that faithful believers work with and encourage all US citizens to participate in vigilant monitoring and advocacy for:

- A comprehensive plan (national, state, and local municipality), for accelerated testing, contact tracing, and quarantine processes as essential components of reopening policies and strategies

- A prudent reopening process of the Federal Government and State Governments, which holds leaders accountable for their action, inaction, and public policy enforcement in protecting human life

- Safety for people working on the front lines of health care provision and essential services

- Swift and comprehensive support for neglected cultural and racial/ethnic groups, the working class, and people living in poverty, who disproportionately bear the impact of COVID-19 virus given historic US socioeconomic health disparities

- Nutritional support for people in need and ensuring safety in the food service industry (retail operations through distribution networks)

- The provision of health care and mental health services including incarcerated persons in the US

- Safety of persons living in continuing care communities, congregant care facilities, and the homeless

- Development of responsive and responsible ministry models for congregational direct action, models that support the most vulnerable who fall through the safety nets in our communities during this pandemic

- Networking among our member congregations in outreach ministries

Adopted May 26, 2020