



## **Ankeny UCC Re-gathering Policy Summary April 20, 2021**

The time since March 2020 has been a difficult one for Ankeny UCC and our journey toward Christ together. Used to welcoming old and new faces to our sanctuary, we replaced our intimate gatherings with the less-personal broadcast through YouTube. In the face of these difficulties, and recognizing our need to care within our community by offering answers to the question, "when will we re-gather", the Council commissioned this Church Re-Gathering Committee. This committee, chaired by Judy Hines, consisted of Deacon Luke Schut, Trustee Tom Rupp, and Pastor Nathan was charged with understanding the public health challenges, the logistical changes, and the spiritual needs that must be met for us to safely gather indoors as a church once more.

We utilized the Georgia Tech Event Risk Assessment Planning Tool (GTERAPT). GTERAPT takes county-level data from a two-week cycle, estimates for gaps in testing, and shows the estimated chance (0-100%) that at least one COVID-19 positive individual will be present at an event in a county, given the size of the event.

Using this model, we were able to determine a comfort zone based on percent risk of one COVID-19 positive individual per max number group size allowed per phase for Polk County. The Committee has developed phases on when it is safe to return to in-person worship and at what capacity:

- Phase 1 –Building is closed when state government mandates closure or someone with a positive COVID-19 has been present on our campus. Virtual services will continue.
- Phase 2 – allows max gathering of 10 people when GTERAPT's estimate is below 50% for 10 people. (The only event allowed in Phase 2 is a funeral.)
- Phase 3- allows max gathering of 50 people when GTERAPT's estimate is below 50% for 50 people.
- Phase 4 - allows extended participation in the sanctuary when GTERAPT's estimate is below 25% for 50 people.

**GTERAPT's estimate for Polk County has now been below 50% for two months, so Ankeny UCC is moving to Phase 3 as of May 2.** The complete report developed by the Church Re-Gathering Committee can be found [here](#) . Please reach out to any members of the Council with questions.