

August 18, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are excited to announce that September 6th will be the Sunday that we will re-open the church for in person worship. I know that for many of us we have been waiting for this. And even though we are excited to be able to be back in our building again, we want everyone who enters our doors to feel safe. So I am writing to let you know some of the safety procedures that we will have in place.

1. We will be requiring masks to be worn upon entering the building. We are asking that everyone wear a mask during the entire service. We will have masks available for those who may have inadvertently forgotten their masks. As members of the family of God we want to do all that we can to stop community spread and masks are one of the ways to do that.
2. We will be practicing social distancing. We have marked off pews that are not going to be used. We would ask that only families that live in the **same household** sit together. Please remember that we need to sit at least six feet apart. That could mean that larger families may need to sit on a bench without anyone on the other end. We will be assessing attendance and I will recommend adding services if attendance dictates that response.
3. We will not be passing offering plates, we will limit congregational responses and we will not have congregational singing. We will have music, but would ask that you sing in your heart rather than out loud.
4. We will be doing virtual passing of the peace. Those who would like to may use their smartphones and text or email members who are in the sanctuary with us or those who will be worshipping online. We will NOT however be passing the peace physically and would ask that you refrain from hugging, shaking hands or any thing that would put you closer than six feet apart. Waving for now will be a welcome and encouraged gesture.
5. We will have hand sanitizer available at several places around the building.
6. We will be taking part in communion on the 6th. We will have a table set up with individual packaged communion elements. We will also be providing napkins. We are asking that each person who plans on taking part during the liturgy pick up a container of elements. When the time comes we will take the bread and the wine together. The pastor will lead us when to take the elements.
7. We will begin live streaming the worship service during our regular worship time. If you would rather continue to worship with us online you will be able to find us on either our YouTube or Facebook channels. If you are worshipping online September 6th, please have bread and juice or the items that you are going to use for communion so that you are able to participate with us virtually.

The Leadership Council is working hard to monitor the situation in the area and do what we can to make sure that we are not only keeping members safe but the community safe as well. At this time, we are reopening for in-person worship only. We will be meeting and discussing when and how to reopen for other events. Once those plans are made, we will notify you as soon as possible.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, has instructed us to "Do no harm." Jesus has also said that we are not to harm our brothers and sisters, but to love them. By practicing those things

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that will help prevent and lessen the spread of the COVID-19 virus we are loving our God and our neighbor. I look forward to seeing and participating with you in worship on September 6th!

Blessings,
Pastor Jackie Freeman
First UMC/Rabke UMC