

Dear Church Family,

I hope this letter finds you all healthy, well, and ready to worship our God together! The Church Council, in accordance with the Illinois Great Rivers Conference of The United Methodist Church, has decided to resume worship on Sunday, July 5th. Because our goal is to keep each of you safe, there will be several changes made to the way in which we worship, but I think ultimately, we will still find this a fulfilling and meaningful experience.

One of the biggest changes is worship times. As we need time to have the church thoroughly cleaned after each service, we will now be holding worship on Sunday mornings at 9:30 AM and Sunday evenings at 6:00 PM. These two services will be identical for the time being. Because we are only allowed to have 100 people in each service, which includes liturgists, ushers, greeters, and power point people, we will be asking each of you to sign up one time only for the service that you would like to attend. There is a link posted on the main page of our church website (tuscolaumc.org) that you can click to sign up, or you can call the office and either speak to Lora or leave a message as to which service you wish to attend. Sign up is limited to 75 people per service to allow for visitors and staff. It is so important that you sign up because, if we go over our number for one service, we will be forced to ask people to leave. This is something that would be so painful to me and to the church as a whole, so please, please sign up! If you would like to change your time for one or more weeks, please contact Lora in the office.

Other important changes to note are:

- We will be using folding chairs to enable us to better clean them after each use. If you would like, you may bring a cushion from home to make these chairs more comfortable. You will find the chairs will be spread out in small groups throughout the sanctuary. If you need a larger group of chairs for your family, you will be able to move chairs, but we ask that you only sit with members of your household for worship.
- We will enter through the main doors and exit through the side church door. A greeter will open the doors for you, so you do not have to touch them. We will dismiss by sections so that it is easier to maintain social distancing.
- Masks/face coverings must be worn at all times in the church. We will have face masks available for those who do not have one. Research shows that face masks/coverings are helpful to keep from spreading the virus, so to me, this falls under Jesus' command to love your neighbor. If you do not wear a mask, you will be unable to attend worship for the safety of others.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided, and you are encouraged to use it.
- There will be no handshaking, hugging, touching, or passing any items between attendees.
- No hymnals or bulletins will be used for the time being.
- While we will have an offertory time for reflection, we will not pass the plates. The offering baskets will be placed in the rear of the church. You may use them whenever you'd like.
- At this time, research shows that singing spreads the virus much more easily than talking, so we will not be singing in service. Choir will not be meeting until the situation has changed. We will still provide piano music, solo music, and possibly handbell music in the service.
- At this time, we will not be able to serve communion or perform baptisms. I hope to be able to serve communion by August or September.
- There will be no Children's Church or Sunday School for adults held on Sundays. However, if your class would like to meet at other times during the week, we can arrange to have you meet

in the Fellowship Hall to assist with social distancing. Please talk to Lora or Terri about arranging that.

- No food is allowed to be served on church property. This includes coffee hour.
- Restrooms will be open, however, we ask that they be used only if absolutely necessary and, if possible, only one person at a time should enter. Parents with small children are asked to use the nursery bathroom.
- The office will remain locked during service. If you need to use the copier or other office equipment, please see Terri before or after service.
- If you test positive, are in contact with anyone who has tested positive, or feel unwell, we ask that, for the safety of everyone, you do not attend until you are better.

Please note that the service will still be recorded and placed online. If you have a compromised immune system or are simply not comfortable in a large group setting yet, you are more than welcome to continue worshipping online.

I know there is a lot to process here, but instead of focusing on the things that hurt a bit, such as the lack of singing or communion, I'm focusing on the joy I will feel when I see each of your faces mirroring God's love back at me. While this time has been incredibly difficult, perhaps it will continually remind us of the importance of corporate worship of our amazing God!

I will see you soon!

Love in Christ,

Pastor Terri