July 9, 2020

After much prayer and consideration our session has decided to resume in-person worship Sunday July 19, 2020 at 10:00AM. We take seriously the church’s calling to gather together and the work of spiritual formation that happens when we do. We also take seriously our calling to love our neighbors and protect and welcome the least and most vulnerable among us. In order to mitigate the risks of gathering together, things will look different when we return to worship.

You can expect the following changes:

* Masks will be mandatory, if you do not have a mask, one will be provided for you at the door.
* Everyone will enter the church using the front entrance on Delaware St. and will be dismissed to exit through the side door. Hand sanitizer is available at the entrance and exit.
* The elevator will still be available for those who need it and will be operated by one person.
* Bulletins will be placed on a table at the entrance. Bibles and hymnals have been removed from the pews and all necessary materials will be printed in the bulletin.
* The pews will be marked off to insure 6ft social distancing.
* Worship will not include congregational responsive readings, singing, or passing the peace and greeting each other.
* The offering plates will be located by the entrance and exit for your convenience.
* No childcare will be provided but we will ensure that there are age appropriate activities available for our young people.
* Services will be 30-45 minutes long.
* There will be no Sunday School, Coffee with Katie, or fellowship hour indoors.
* We will encourage members to wear nametags. In an effort to respect each other’s needs, we will use our nametags as a means of signifying our comfort level with interactions. A red dot will signify that you wish to remain distanced from others and limit your interactions. A yellow dot on your name tag will signify that you are willing to engage in conversation, but do not wish to be physically touched. A green dot signals that you are willing to talk, exchange a fist bump or elbow bump.
* We ask that our members who are planning to join us in worship, that they call or email the church office or RSVP on Facebook. This will help us plan out spacing and activities for our children, but is not required. We will have plenty of room and expect guests and visitors.

We recognize that with or without all these changes, some people will choose to stay home and err on the side of caution.  Staying home is a choice that we will respect, and a choice that should not lead to any feelings of guilt or shame. For those who have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, is feeling unwell, or does not feel comfortable joining us in worship we will have the following options available.

1. You can listen along to the service from your car in the parking lot by tuning into station 87.7FM. We will be happy to bring out a bulletin for you if you call ahead and let us know you’re coming.
2. We will continue to broadcast our worship service online through Facebook and YouTube.

We know that gathering together with the people of God is an important part of our faith and we have worked diligently to ensure that worship is as safe as possible during this pandemic. These are the steps we feel necessary to keep our congregation and our community healthy and we will continue to monitor resources on how to remain safe. We must remember that these changes are temporary and will not last forever and also may change as we find out more information.  We ask for your flexibility and kindness.

The church office will return to our regular hours, Patsy will be available Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday 12:00pm-4:00pm. My office hours will continue to be flexible as we begin a new normal; my days off will be Fridays and Saturdays.

I want to thank our COVID-19 Task Force, Dr. Chuck Cubbage, Barb Kohl and David Vliek as we well as our Session for their prayerful consideration and implementations of these measures.

May God bless you and keep you always,

Rev. Katie Hartwell