



First United Methodist Church

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July 8, 2020

Dear First Church Family,

During our online worship this past Sunday, our Office Manager Ellen Hill and I made an important announcement about our first steps toward re-gathering at First Church.

Ellen reported on the results of our recent congregational survey. In total, we received 172 responses, which provided us with the following information:

- 44% of respondents are ready to return to in-person worship in the near future.
- 30% of respondents plan to wait to see how circumstances progress before they return to worship.
- 17% of respondents noted that they will return to worship after a longer waiting period.
- The remaining 9% of respondents are still unsure how they feel, or they had a different explanation for when they would be ready to return to in-person worship.

In view of the positive response to the survey, and if the number of COVID-19 cases in our area remains at a safe level, we plan to re-gather for worship in our church sanctuary on Sunday, July 26. As a first step, we plan to have one service, at 8:30 a.m. at least through the month of August.

We will also continue to offer worship online. Those who wish to worship from home will be able to have the same worship experience as those who worship in the sanctuary. In addition, we will encourage small groups to gather safely outdoors.

When we re-gather at the church, we are committed to ensure the health and safety of everyone. We will follow the CDC guidelines for cleaning and have other plans in place to ensure the health and safety of all those who enter the church building.

We will practice physical distancing, require everyone to wear masks, have hand sanitizing stations, and ask that members of the same household remain together while in the building. During worship, we will also refrain from hand-shaking, hugging, etc. While we will provide creative worship opportunities and music, to prevent the spread of the virus, we will not have congregational singing during the early stages of re-gathering.

Over the next few weeks our Reopening Task Force, church staff, and others will be actively involved in preparing for this first step in re-gathering for worship. Before July 26, we will have more information to share.

As we re-gather for worship, our church building will remain closed for everything except activities considered vital to the health and well-being of our congregation and community (such as Juniper Tree Counseling, NA and AI-Anon meetings). Our pastors and staff are still available and our congregation will continue to be active. If you need to access the building, please contact our Office Manager, Ellen Hill.

I give thanks to God for your faithfulness to the life and ministry of First Church, especially over these past few months under quarantine. Please join me in prayer as we take our first steps toward re-gathering in our church building and look forward to that day when we will all be together again!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Denny

Opening Doors with Christ, One Another and Our Neighbors