



First United Methodist Church

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Dear First Church Family,

"Rejoice Always. Pray continually. Give thanks in every situation because this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." (I Thess. 5:16-18)

In July, after our church building had been closed for all services and activities for four months, we took a big step toward re-gathering as a congregation. We resumed in person worship on Sunday morning, while still offering worship online via our church website. In September, we started The Gathering, a Sunday evening service in our church parking lot. During this same time period, we've been able to stay connected, online and in person, in many ways. Because of your faithful commitment, First Church has continued to be alive and active in this most uncommon year.

While we had hoped that by now we could have more in-person services and activities, recently there has been a dramatic increase in COVID-19 cases in our community. We pray for those that have been affected, both in our older adult population, but also persons of every age group. In view of the increase in cases, and out of concern for everyone's health and safety, our Re-Gathering Task Force has made the very difficult decision to take a "pause" from in-person worship for the Advent Season.

Beginning next Sunday, November 29, we will live stream our Sunday morning service at 8:15. A recording of that service will be available on our website so that you may worship at the time that is best for you. As we continue to monitor case numbers in December, we'll keep you informed about worship Christmas Eve and in the New Year.

During the month of December, we are also going to limit use of our church building only for those activities we consider essential. This includes:

- 1) activities related to providing online worship.
- 2) activities considered vital to the health and well-being of our community, such as Juniper Tree Counseling, NA meetings, Little Friends Preschool, and limited care team activities.
- 3) activities related to essential church business. We will have limited office hours.

If you have any questions about building use, our office manager Ellen Hill is available and happy to answer your questions. Please contact Ellen at office@fumchurch.com or call her at 717-766-4611.

Even though we won't be worshipping in person, we are still planning "A December to Remember" at First Church. I encourage you to visit our church website, fumchurch.com, and to stay informed about special services and events planned for this season.

For many of us, this Thanksgiving will be different. However, we can still give thanks for God's faithfulness even in this uncommon time. I pray that you and your loved ones will be safe and healthy, and that you will have a most blessed Thanksgiving!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Denny

Opening Doors with Christ, One Another and Our Neighbors