

OUR MISSION IS TO BUILD A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY WITH ALL PEOPLE

WESLEY PARK UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Dear friends,

July 1, 2020

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ! I am thankful for this opportunity to reach out to you. This letter contains important information about upcoming opportunities to worship together. This is the first of five letters you will be receiving in the coming weeks to help you understand as fully as possible the path ahead.

The Joshua Task Force of Wesley Park has been regularly meeting to prepare policies and procedures to help us gather again in the safest possible way. Eric Terry is the chairperson. He is joined by Deb Hodges, Ken Oesch, Jane Ellen Johnson, Sara Kropp, Bob Williams, Lynda Edsall, Bill Schick, Annette Jeltema, and me.

The work of the Joshua Task Force is to take whatever time is necessary to protect the health and wellbeing of the people who come to worship and to develop policies and practices for all of us to follow. The Task Force has moved at a deliberate pace on purpose and are monitoring all available data as well as lessons learned from the Michigan Conference and other communities of faith.

If current trends continue, we plan to open for in-person worship on August 2, 2020 at 10 am. Hallelujah! We are monitoring the Kent County Covid-19 data (www.accesskent.com/Health/covid-19-data) and will make adjustments if needed.

We recognize there is no vaccine or treatment for Covid-19. We understand that people over 60, those with diabetes, autoimmune disease, cancer, breathing issues, heart issues, and other conditions, make them susceptible to infection. Therefore, we will have a variety of contingencies to help people connect to worship and to one another in ways that are safest for them. The letters that follow in the weeks ahead will detail all you will need to know going forward.

The plan that is being developed will include:

1. **Online Worship.** Our worship services for the last 16 weeks have been online, and that will continue. This will include live-streaming our in-person worship services.
2. **Public-Access Television Worship.** We will continue to broadcast Wesley Park worship on WKTV each Tuesday at noon.
3. **In-person Worship.** Our in-person worship will be in the Family Life Center. The FLC will allow for social distancing, an ordered and safe flow into and out of the church using the Welcome Center doors, accessibility to bathrooms, video projection, and hard surfaces, which will help with disinfection. With proper distancing, the FLC will have a capacity of 60 people.
4. **Parking Lot Worship.** Each worship service will also be broadcast on a short-wave FM radio transmitter, accessible from a car radio in the church parking lot. The parking lot option could be used as overflow if there are over 60 people who are present. Also, some might feel safer "going" to church but not being in a setting with others. Or, people who are unable to wear a mask would have the option of worshipping using radio transmission.

Additional precautions to be a part of our regular practice going forward:

- Masks covering the nose and mouth will be required for everyone who enters the church.
- No-touch hand sanitizers will be readily available.
- Movement will be limited.
- The church building will be closed during the week.
- We will only use the Welcome Center entrance and exit.
- People who come to worship will need to call in to reserve a space.
- The church and all surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected strictly following the CDC guidelines.
- There will be no singing in worship.
- All church groups will communicate with the Joshua Task Force and follow guidelines and procedures.

Next week you will receive a letter that will describe how to enter the church for in-person worship. That letter will detail the reasoning for the use of masks and how to wear a mask properly, how to maintain proper social distancing, and ways to greet one another that do not include hugging or hand-shakes. We will also let you know in more detail the responsibilities for each person on the Joshua Task Force.

The week of July 12 you will receive a letter that describes the precautions we will need to undertake. These precautions include how we will disinfect surfaces, how to wash our hands, the necessity to limit the people in your vehicle to those who live with you, and why we will need to refrain from lingering in the church. We will explain in this letter the reasons for refraining from singing, and the possibilities of new ways to praise God.

The letter that you will receive the week of July 19 will describe what a day of worship will look and feel like. You will get a better sense of the movement from the parking lot, through the check-in process, into the Family Life Center, and what you can expect for each worship service.

The week of July 26 will include instructions for reserving a space for the in-person worship. We will need to take reservations so that we are prepared with chairs and proper spacing. This registration process will also help us with contact tracing. If someone does become ill we will let all who were present know.

The week of August 3 will be a follow-up letter to reflect on what we learned after our first in-person service.

May God bless you and keep you.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rev. Dean N. Prentiss". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Dean N. Prentiss