

June 29, 2020

Hello Church and Friends.

It has been and continues to be a strange and challenging time as we work our way through the twists and turns that have evolved from the Covid pandemic. As you know, the ministry and worship life of St. Johns, like all other "life," has changed with the other ebbs and flows.

As of this letter, we have held 15 Sundays of services on-line through the ZOOM platform. The "attendance" at these services and the patience and positive responses to them have been gratifying and a true testimony of faith, commitment, and the kindness of our church family and friends.

Our leadership has attempted to remain on top of all the changing phases and protocols and suggestions and recommendations that go with them. As you recall from earlier correspondences, our primary concern has been the safety and consideration of our typically attending members and friends, particularly those who are of the more susceptible groups of retirement age and beyond and those with pre-existing health conditions. We are all being told that the possibility of a spike in cases is real, particularly as the summer progresses with more social interactions and the cooler months of Fall arrive.

At the same time, many of our congregation are comfortable and ready to gather together, with some reasonable precautions, and surely all of us miss our sanctuary and the sacred space it provides for us. **With that in mind, Consistory has agreed to make Sunday, July 19 @ 10:15 am the return date and time for "re-opening" the church sanctuary for worship.** (This, of course, is, again, contingent upon resurgence protocol that might evolve should the State re-mandate quarantine measures.)

Re-opening does not mean things go back to a free-for-all normalcy of the past. We continue to be committed to the importance of creating and maintaining an ongoing attention to safety and care for each other. **Therefore, we are still asking all of us to adhere to the following protocol if you chose to return to the sanctuary July 19 and for the immediate future after:**

- Entrance will be at the Narthex doors ONLY (no entrance or exiting through the office-end doors or playground doors)
- We ask that all wear a mask to enter and exit the building. Once seated in the sanctuary, masks can be removed for the service, and put on again for exiting the sanctuary
- Attendees will be ushered and directed to a seat as a way of ensuring social distancing, which we still want to maintain throughout our time in the sanctuary
- Offering will be received by way of dropping your gift into a plate that will be placed at the sanctuary door

- For the first few weeks, we will not be singing hymns during the service. Philip will be playing prelude and postlude and special music, but no hymn/praise song singing; we will hopefully resume singing in August.
- We will provide Children's Church for the children as we anticipate having enough room for social distancing and/or hold time with the children outdoors
- There will be no bulletins. Any service outline material will be shown on the screens
- If there are refreshments, weather permitting, they will be outside so that fellowship can occur outdoors
- And we request that if anyone has symptoms of fever, sore throat, headache, they refrain from attending worship that morning

As many churches and company have become acquainted with using virtual platforms for services and meetings, the demand for appropriate equipment has skyrocketed. We have contracted and ordered and are being scheduled for installations and upgrades to our sound and visual equipment. The likelihood of all that being accomplished by July 19 is not promising. However, we will still provide a live stream of the service via either ZOOM or our website with Youtube or something similar so that those unable or not ready to attend in-house can join live with the service until they are ready.

Again, the technological updates are being address; these include: getting internet access in the sanctuary, live streaming equipment, repairs to our sound system amplifiers that went on the fritz as we were trying to "rehearse" a few Sundays back, and microphone upgrades to our pulpit and altar. Contracts for this work and services have been signed, and deposits made. We know there are several who have expressed interest and willingness to help financially insure that these upgrades and additions happen. The cost totals about \$4300. ***If you are an interested party in helping to cover these costs, please feel free to send in your gift and mark it "TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE."*** ***It would be most appreciated*** as, you might imagine, these are unbudgeted expenses that we're hoping can be covered with such special gifts.

There will also be a renewed need for help with running some of this technology (which will not be difficult) each Sunday. We'd like to enlarge our small team. If you're interested in being part of the sound & visual team, please let me know.

Again, I personally and on behalf of the Consistory applaud and thank you for your exemplary generosity and fiscal faithfulness during these past months; the months of April and May were really astounding (June is starting to look like a usual June – excite us some more by remembering to give your offerings this month as you have been! Thanks!!). Your giving has been exceptional and a statement of your commitment to what God has done, is doing, and, we know assuredly, will do with and through St. Johns UCC.

Lastly, continue to join virtually on ZOOM with our Service of Devotion Sundays July 5 & 12 @ 10:15 am (go to www.denverstjohns.org and click on the ZOOM button) while we wait for our July 19 return to the sanctuary.

Blessings to you all,

Pastor Brad

St. Johns UCC Consistory