

IMAGINING OUR RETURN TO WORSHIP . . .

We are FINALLY permitted to come back together as a church family! It is a day of great celebration! If you are feeling well and haven't been in contact with anyone who is sick, it's time to get yourself ready to worship in-person!

You and your family arrive at church with masks on all family members (except those under 3!) And don't worry if you do not have a mask or forgot yours at home. Our Stitches of the Heart ministry has been busy making masks to share with our church family.

As you approach the church doors, they are propped open so you do not even have to touch them. Everyone is asked nicely to use a bit of the hand sanitizer there by the door. It is there whenever you need it, and we always have soap and water in the freshly cleaned bathrooms.

You are so very happy to see everyone! But it is not yet the time in our world for hugs or handshakes - we must keep our social distance. It has been so long since we have all been together . . . it is great to catch up with our church family, even if it is from at least six feet away!

You notice the worship space looks different. First you see the offering boxes by the door, for those wishing to give their tithes and offerings in-person (online giving is always available). Next, you'll notice all seating arranged at appropriate distances. You are able to sit together with the people in your household, while keeping the appropriate distance from others. If you made a seating RSVP in advance (so helpful for those preparing for the service), you will find your special spot marked just for you.

You also notice plenty of new signage to help you know and understand where to go and what to do. Get comfortable and take some time to read the bulletin, which is running on the video screens. In fact, you notice we aren't handing out anything or even using shared hymnals and Bibles. We are so thankful for technology!

Oh what a blessing to enjoy the music and talent of David B and the band, or Vicky and Charlene, with perhaps a soloist or two. While we are not allowed to sing along just yet, we love being in our building and enjoying the music in person.

We have waited all these months until we could be together to partake in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. And although the elements may be a little different, we will offer Communion in a way that is safe for all. You leave the service feeling renewed by the grace of Lord's Supper. And we will find ways to safely share Holy Communion with those unable to attend in-person worship.

Some of our church family, particularly our most vulnerable, may not be joining us in service just yet. We are still livestreaming both services so many are joining us online. Still others are blessed through our services on Cox 21, and even a few participate by watching the DVD we have delivered right to their door. We are thankful they are staying safe!

In the early months of returning to in-person worship, all younger family members will stay in the service with their parents. This helps us follow the social distancing guidelines and keeps our staff members safe.

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place, even when we sit a little further apart! We are doing some things in a new way, and we doing them out of love! Love for God, love for our neighbors, love for our church, and love for ourselves. We always remember the three general rules for Methodists: Do no harm; Do all the good we can; and Stay in love with God!

And by the way, you may want to treat your family to coffee and donuts on the way home from church, because, (for right now) we won't be serving those. Hard to enjoy them anyway while wearing our face masks.

We are so thankful you are here!