

## **Congregational input for Rev. Rooks' questions around COVID19 & our ministry**

### **How have we adapted and responded?**

- Pastor Deb has handled a difficult situation beautifully, and I have had no problem adapting
- Jessica has been essential (and Sarah too) in teaching and demonstrating that digital format is possible, not ideal, but possible
- Pastor Deb and the facilities team has doggedly made the facility as safe as possible.
- We have continued to heavily rely on the weekly “happenings” to keep us as connected as much as possible
- Online worship has been a great addition to the weekly worship line up and over time has evolved very positively
- Going the extra mile to support our outstanding community helping agencies, Evergreen Christian Outreach and the Mountain Resource Center

### **What have we lost and are grieving?**

- fellowship. spontaneity. likely some opportunity for spiritual growth
- some who have left will likely not return
- while we can conduct our business, it is an imperfect platform that some struggle with (and therefore do not participate)
- some infant ministry that would have yielded much fruit has been delayed/suspended
- I suspect some of our members have become isolated
- ministries of gathering (choir/food fellowship/learning) have been suspended
- in person care to those hospitalized or in care center
- not being able to adequately grieve and honor the lives of those who have passed on
- some of our long time stalwart leadership has stepped down from their posts, sadly
- I grieve for the larger church because we have been set back from our mission.
- I grieve for Methodism, because we've only delayed resolving our problems, which haven't magically gone away.

### **What are we celebrating and has been life giving?**

- faith demonstrated by the church in the 2020 pledge campaign
- a new appreciation for our pastor and staff, and what we HAVE been able to do
- a number of people who have stepped up to innovate, particularly in the area of children's and youth ministry
- we have mostly adapted with grace to the gathering protocols necessary—this has demonstrated a love and care for one another
- ministries of helping have continued regardless
- I've enjoyed my time hibernating with my wife, I'm reading the Bible daily, and my prayer life has been enriched
- Pastor Deb has relentlessly stayed in touch with the congregation
- online class offerings attracting a diverse group of people
- we have learned (for the most part!!) to communicate with grace by electronic means
- our digital worship offerings have provided a flexible platform for people
- the denominational troubles have taken a back-seat to doing our ministry
- a staff and core lay leadership team that because of their strong teamwork together and commitment to the congregation was able to guide the congregation well during this time
- some of our long-time stalwart leadership has stepped down from their posts making room for new forms and ideas

- new lively and engaging ways to do our social justice ministry through the Church & Society team
- switching to digital financial management and additional administrative needs
- people with different skill sets becoming involved in our ministry in new ways

### **What have we learned?**

- of our resilience
- that our faithfulness is rewarded by God's faithfulness
- uses of technology (at least marginally)
- that perhaps, God is 'doing a new thing'
- That *"suffering times often are growing times within the church"*, which will hopefully be seen when we return to normal, and it is a better and enthusiastic normal
- that Staff Parish Relations was ahead of the game when they arranged for our office manager and bookkeeper to be able to do hours remotely
- in pausing, slowing down we have increased our personal spiritual practices and our walk with God
- we can likely reach many people in a digital format though competition for folks' attention will be/is fierce
- we must very carefully review our "events" to determine what outcomes we hope for vs what we receive/accomplish

### **How have we changed?**

- in many ways we are simply waiting and holding our breath.
- the informal structures of governance have been altered—meaning of this is unknown
- we do not have a way to gauge participation in our ministries, we cannot follow-up with guests unless they are physically with us
- I've had the opportunity to do a lot of soul searching. Perhaps I'm a little better person than a year ago, but the Lord will be the judge of that
- improved congregational singing leadership
- some new creative approaches for our music ministry
- we have become more likely to conduct our relational (and business) transactions by email/phone
- our in-person protocols while strange at the start have become part of our new normal
- our people have been increasingly been part of the weekly worship as they have felt comfortable and safe