*But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.* *~* Jeremiah 29:7

Dear Friends,

With Pastor Jill on partial sabbatical, she asked me to compose a piece for Happenings regarding Governor Baker’s recent announcement about reopening of houses of worship.

The above scripture and quoted excerpts are taken from a SNEUCC blog post on May 15th:

“This is a time unlike anything we have experienced in our lifetimes…. We have had moments of creative ingenuity and moments of overwhelming exhaustion.

We entered it in chaos, we plan to move through it with intention. *We’re not reopening.  Because we never closed.*  We have engaged ministry in new ways.  We will move forward in new ways.

First, there is no way to ensure the overall safety of our congregations and communities until there is a trusted vaccine.

Second, in person worship in sanctuaries is one of the types of gatherings that is most likely to spread the infection.

Third, we don’t know everything about this disease and its impact on all ages… it [is] hard to predict trends, safety measures, and phases.

Fourth, our congregations are comprised of the populations most vulnerable to Covid-19.

Fifth, an outbreak in our churches impacts our communities and the capacity of our health care system.

[Old Parish will follow the SNEUCC Conference 4-phase approach] tied to local conditions and the guidance of local government and health care professionals.

The way forward won’t be linear. Based on these phases and the current trends we believe in person worship in buildings will need to be suspended through at least the end of the summer.”

Pastor Jill and Council continue to monitor and discuss the situation as well as our innovative worship practices to ensure that we are effectively reaching and serving our parishioners and friends.

If you have questions or concerns, please be in touch, 229-8980 or via email: [jhannum01257@gmail.com](mailto:jhannum01257@gmail.com).

Be safe, be well and with blessings,

Julie Hannum, Moderator