



THE METHODIST MOSAIC

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Dear Friends,

Many in our congregation have asked about plans for resuming in-person worship, and indeed in our Kent church and in the East Ohio Conference there has been much conversation about the way forward. We look for guidance in this respect not to our politicians, but to Christ, who taught us to follow two great commandments:

Love God—This means that we worship and praise God, and of course the worship in our church has never ceased! The building might be closed, but our church gathers for worship every Sunday through our two livestreamed services.

Our online attendance has been larger than our total online/in-person attendance prior to the pandemic, so our congregation continues to faithfully come together to praise God. The one element missing in this scenario is that some in our congregation are unable to connect with online worship; this will be addressed below.

Love your neighbor—Our love for God expresses itself in love for one another. In the present circumstances, this means that we act in every way possible to protect the health of our neighbor. For church life, this has meant refraining from in-person meetings (Bible studies and meetings are by Zoom), and it has meant refraining from in-person worship gatherings.

As the world slowly returns to restaurant dining and other activities, church leaders are also mapping out the sort of gradual steps we may take on the road to returning eventually to in-person worship. Bishop Malone has had a task force which established a detailed set of guidelines for churches to follow. She recently upgraded the status of our Conference to allow for a return to small group gatherings (following social distancing practices) and to allow for a limited return to some forms of worship, as long as worship follows a strict set of parameters to provide maximum assurance of safety. This move is in keeping with other denominations in Ohio. Catholic parishes in Ohio, for example, have been reopening a scaled-back form of in-person worship (following strict guidelines) in late May, but of course it looks quite different from how it did before the pandemic!

In the present circumstances, we do not see good reason to resume in-person worship at our 9:30 or 10:30 services, because we cannot yet safely gather with the kinds of numbers that we have at those services. Our top priority in this process is protecting the health of all who enter our building. We plan to continue the livestreamed-only format of 9:30 and 10:30 worship for the duration of the summer. As we approach late summer, with school starting, we will evaluate the situation and announce plans for the fall. This will also include potentially restarting in-person Sunday School, youth group, choirs, Bible studies, and other activities.

At the same time, we see a need to provide a worship opportunity for those who are not able to access our digital worship, whether through the internet or through the worship DVDs that are available from the church office. With that audience in mind, we plan a limited resumption of in-person worship at the 8:30 worship hour, starting on the second Sunday in June—June 14. This will be very different from what 8:30 worship was like before the pandemic. The service will be in the sanctuary, to spread people out across a large space, and it will follow a detailed set of parameters that are designed to ensure the maximum safety for those who attend. You will find those parameters on the next page. Keep in mind that this is not a summons for all our regular 8:30 worshippers to come back to worship in the church building! This service will look nothing like the chapel service, a service that we hope to resume—as it once was—in the future. This is for people who ordinarily worshipped at any hour who need an in-person worship experience.

I appreciate the steadfastness of our congregation. With patience, grace, and unwavering commitment to God, our people have continued in devotion to God and service to neighbor. Thank you for your faithfulness!

Dr. David Palmer

Youth Ministry News

June 2020

As June approaches and we begin to plan for a staggered reopening of our church, I wanted to address what will be happening in the area of Christian Education in the near future.

First, regarding Sunday school, the decision has been made that we will not be hosting Sunday school or providing child care until the fall when we reopen all of our in-person worship services. When Sunday school does resume, we will be following the State Board of education guidelines for schools and the policies that are put in place by the Kent City School District. These policies and practices will be followed during youth group as well.

Additionally, with regards to Sunday school and preparing for our fall reopening. I feel it is safe to assume that there will be classroom student limits of some kind put in place. Therefore, we can anticipate an increased need for additional Sunday school teachers this fall. If you would like to be a part of the important ministry of our Sunday school leadership, please contact me so that you can be included in our plans to move forward.

On the youth front, we are now officially closed for summer break. As mentioned earlier, when the guidelines for reopening schools are officially made public, we will be adopting those practices and releasing a schedule for all youth activities sometime in August.

I understand that it is everyone's desire to return to "the way things were." However, it is our responsibility as the church to be the hands and feet of Christ, to love our neighbor and to lead by example in keeping them safe. Please continue to pray for our Christian Education department and the entire leadership of the church as we continue to discern God's will for his church moving forward.

Shalom,
Rick <>

Cloth Face Masks

Volunteers in the church, spearheaded by Dottie Emerick, have been making cloth face coverings as recommended by the CDC to slow the spread of COVID-19. These masks will be available individually packaged in a box under the portico at the sanctuary entrance. If you or members of your family are in need of masks, please help yourself.

TRASH AND TREASURE SALE

Mega-sale planned for late August

We have of course cancelled the sale originally scheduled for May, and now are targeting one sale in 2020, to occur in the latter part of August, coinciding with the return of students to the Kent State campus (hopefully!). Obviously there are uncertainties around this, but we are developing a plan for a sale that will have more space, a much longer prep time, and a somewhat different structure to align with social distance requirements. This presumes that the state of Ohio will have more activities open by late August and that the Kent State campus will reopen. Carol Pozuc will be assembling a leadership team in the coming weeks, and more details will be announced in the coming months. In the meantime, keep collecting all those items that you expect to donate! The Trash and Treasure Sale provides important funding for our church's mission work.

ONLINE SUNDAY SCHOOL CONTINUES

Throughout the summer, at-home Sunday School lessons will continue to be available through our web site at www.kentmethodist.org/sundayschool.

VBS 2020 has been cancelled:

In light of Governor DeWine's decision to keep all K-12 schools closed for the remainder of the school year, and in the interest of the safety of our churches children and families, the decision has been made to cancel VBS for this summer. It is our hope that we can host VBS in the summer of 2021 on the same corresponding date. Watch the newsletter in early 2021 for updates regarding VBS 2021

IN-PERSON WORSHIP TO RESUME AT 8:30—STARTING JUNE 14

This is targeted toward people who are not able to connect with our livestreamed worship.

The following parameters are in keeping with guidelines set by our Bishop.

Worship at 8:30 will be structured in a way to ensure the safety of all who attend in this time of pandemic. If you come to 8:30 worship, you can anticipate the following elements:

1. The service will be in the sanctuary, so as to allow broad social distance among participants
2. Entrance doors will be propped open, so you will not need to touch door handles
3. All worshippers are requested to wear a mask. Extra masks will be available at the doors
4. Sarah Brosvic and Rick Stout will be serving as greeter/ushers. They will guide you to available seats
5. Specific seating places will be marked on the pews. There will be two pews left empty in front of each available row, and people will be able to sit either at the ends of pews or the very middle. This leaves well over six feet in all directions.
6. Purell will be available at various places.
7. There will be no bulletins. The projection screens will be in use.
8. There will be no passing of the plate. An offering plate will be available at the entrance.
9. There will be no "greeting time." Dr. Palmer will greet people after the service, but at a distance, with no handshaking!
10. If you wish to socialize with others, we ask that you plan to converse in the parking lot before or after the service.
11. There will be no singing. It is very difficult for us, especially in our Methodist tradition, to conceive of worship without singing. In our livestreamed worship, of course, we have singing, and people are encouraged to sing at home! But multiple studies are showing that singing is tantamount to coughing or sneezing when it comes to spreading the coronavirus; it is a dangerous activity for a whole congregation to be doing for multiple minutes in worship! As our Bishop's guidelines state, "Congregational singing is strongly discouraged because singing propels droplets farther." We look forward to singing hymns again at a future date.
12. Music will be provided by our organist, Dawn Filler, for the prelude and postlude. The service will not end until the postlude is completed. Worshippers will be able to appreciate not only the sound of our beautiful organ, but also the fact that they will be able to see Dawn on the screens.
13. Worshippers will be ushered out at the end, in a fashion similar to a wedding (one row at a time, but starting at the back, so that people are not walking right past others)
14. The service is expected to be 35-40 minutes in length

With all these unusual features, we still look forward to a meaningful worship experience at the 8:30 hour.

Our sympathies to:

- Family and friends of Marty Andregg
- Mark Ryland and family on the death of his mother
- Tom Emerick and family on the death of his cousin, Philip Emerick
- Jocelyn Schmidt on the death of her father-in-law



Remember
These
Members
in Their
Sorrow

THANK YOU

A big thank you to Dave and Pat Gynn for dropping off Communion elements to the 8:30 service members. It means so much.

Cara Desko

Recent Hospitalizations and Surgeries:

Doug Beatty, Betty Coleman, Shirli Dana, Diana Douglas, Julie Foster, Joyce Given, Fred Gross, Pat Gynn, Khristian Kay, Edgar Kooijman, Anthony Rota, Carl Schierhorn, Margie Stahl, Laura Stewart, Louellen Sue Ross, Ken Wertz



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Mailed June 1

“Fear not, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God.”
Isaiah 41:10

Worship Calendar

| Date | Sermon | Scripture | Preacher | Special Event |
|---------|---|---|------------------|---------------|
| June 7 | “How to Have Faith When You Are in a Serious Jam” | Genesis 37:17b–28; 39:1–21 | Dr. David Palmer | Communion |
| June 14 | “God Is at Work for Good” | Genesis 42–50 | Dr. David Palmer | |
| June 21 | “It Is Well with My Soul” | Job 1:13–21; II Corinthians 4:7–18 | Dr. David Palmer | |
| June 28 | “God Enables Our Steps on Rough Ground” | Habakkuk 3:17–19; Romans 5:1–5; I Peter 1:3–7 | Dr. David Palmer | |



If you did not yet have the chance to view the organ recital by our own
Dawn Filler, you can find the video at live.kentmethodist.org/recital



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