

Dear Friends and Family,

Summary – face to face worship on Sunday (Nov. 22) is postponed and we will be recording the service. We strongly suggest that all groups at the church postpone meetings this week or meet virtually.

As many of you heard on Sunday morning from Tim Bentzel, our Consistory President, we planned on watching the State Covid-19 Early Warning System Dashboard for guidance on continuing to hold in-person worship services. The Dashboard compiles the Covid-19 case rates by county and compares those rates to the previous seven-day period. Based on the incidence rate of confirmed cases and the positivity rate of those cases, the State offers guidance on the likelihood of community spread transmission and categorizes the risk as Low, Moderate or Substantial. Consistory had decided at our November meeting that it would be in the best interest of the congregation, our Pastor and all of those involved in coordinating our in-person Sunday services to NOT hold in-person worship when the York County hazard rating is at “Substantial” level rating. This rating takes into account a number of considerations including exceeding 500 new cases in the previous week. Sadly, the number of new cases for York County last week was 750, obviously above that 500 new-case guideline.

Therefore, we have had to make the difficult decision to postpone in-person worship this Sunday, November 22, 2020, but will instead have the opportunity to use our new video camera for a higher quality recording that will be placed on the website and Facebook page. The service will be recorded in the sanctuary Saturday morning, the 21nd, with the minister, bell choir and organist. This new camera will provide for a better worship experience, complete with Scripture, sermon and special music when available. We are planning for the video to be available for Sunday morning viewing.

Note that we are not closing the church, BUT we highly recommend that all in-person small group meetings NOT meet in-person but use technology to meet virtually. The decision for in-person worship will be made every Tuesday after the Monday state figures are posted.

We understand how disappointing this decision is for you because it is that disappointing to us, as well. Another part of the criteria that we have had to use in making our decisions is the age of our congregation – many of us are in that

high vulnerability age bracket. It has been cited that 40% of people who contract Covid remain asymptomatic, but able to spread the disease to anyone else. If those other people are a part of the vulnerable population, there can be devastating results. Each and every member of our congregation is a valued family member and we take our responsibility very seriously to diligently protect each and every one of you. We cannot wait until even one person would contract this in our church and become deathly ill or worse.

The good news is we are thankful for the many Sundays we have had to spend time together worshipping and we know that we will worship together again, in the future. Therefore, please keep an eye on our website and Facebook page each week for the postings for in-person services. If you don't have internet access, please feel free to call the church each week to determine if we will have in-person worship the following week or not.

Please know that your Consistory is doing everything possible to keep you safe and at the same time allow for a meaningful worship experience. In these trying times we need to remember our church building is not our God but that He is within us, strengthening us and giving us courage and comfort, however and wherever we worship Him.

We wish you peace and blessings,

Your Consistory – Tim Bentzel, Steve Sechriest, Matt Hildebrecht, Jeff Hershey, Jane Harrison, Reen Bentzel, Jaron Flickinger, Marsha Reiber, Nathan Limbert and Sally Curren