August 26, 2020

Hello LCR Members & Friends,

As we near the end of summer, we give thanks for our time together during our outdoor worship and for the last remaining weeks that we will be able to gather together outside. Last week council met for the monthly meeting and we started discussing the possibility of having indoor worship in October. We reviewed the survey results of 97 member responses below which showed online worship continuing to be a strong first preference, outdoor as a second choice and indoor as a third choice. In addition, we have moved to weekly outdoor worship as we have been doing well with attendance at our worship gatherings and the necessary health and safety protocols.

Taking into consideration the feedback results, as well as the fact that the COVID case numbers have been stabilizing lately, council is working on the structure of how and when indoor worship will happen. We are also looking at adding additional filtration on the HVAC system in the sanctuary to help with air ventilation. It will also be necessary to figure out appropriate social distancing seating requirements. This will mean that you will most likely not be able to sit in your normal seat or near those that you are used to seating near, if you choose to come to in-person worship. We have been talking about the “new normal” and yes this will be part of it…we will be trying our best to fit 75 people into our sanctuary for indoor worship while working to keep health and safety a top priority. We will seat families to the best of our ability based first on who has pre-registered for worship and then followed by those who attend without registering. At this point, we do not know how many people will attend indoor worship but if we have more than the 75 at a service, we will plan to use fellowship hall (downstairs) as our overflow space. There will also need to be other modifications to the service as well as mask wearing, etc to meet requirements for health and safety for all attendees. More specifics will be communicated as decisions are made and we get closer to holding the indoor services.

We will be sending out one more survey request to the congregation after the Labor Day holiday weekend for everyone to submit their final input. The survey will be asking about a preference between online and in-person worship. This way we will know how to prepare for indoor worship and how many people will possibly be attending, and if we will need more than one service to start with.

We have also heard from you that there is a continued need for communion at least once a month once we are indoors. We will have communion outdoors on a weekly basis and online on a monthly basis. We will have self-contained blessed communion cups available for pick-up in the breeze way just inside the front doors of the church starting at the beginning of September. Please take the appropriate number of communion cups for your family. You are always welcome to have bread and grape juice/wine available from your own home as well to celebrate communion with us.

We are also blessed to have the parish education & youth committee working together to figure out the best way possible to bring faith formation to our children, youth and families this fall virtually and with a few in-person outside socially distanced activities. Please stay tuned via Flocknote email/text communications about what’s happening with these exciting upcoming activities in September.

We give thanks that LCR has been blessed as a community of faith and continues to be the church outside of our walls, by checking in on one another through our congregational care ministry calls, food drives for our local ministries, the Sunday community meal program, prayer chain, people sending cards to one another, calling into the office with pastoral care needs and also letting us know what’s happening in their lives. Finally, the council leadership and I want to thank you again for your continued financial support during this unprecedented time of ministry and mission for our church and for churches beyond ourselves. We could not do what we are doing today and into tomorrow without all of you. We have enclosed your statements for review through the end of July 2020. If you have any questions please contact Cheryl in the office.

Many blessings,

Pastor Karen Pahl Tony Baumgardt, Council President