

Hi Friends,

I hope that you, family and loved ones are staying safe and not going stir-crazy with the present situation we find ourselves in! I wanted to give you a couple brief updates on things going on at the church:

1) We have received word from the Bishop's office that we have been asked to hold off returning to "in person" worship services and activities at the church building until May 31st. Of course, with new information coming to light on a weekly basis, that date may change depending on what is safe and prudent. Having said that, we will continue to gather for worship on Sunday mornings at 10:30 am in an online only capacity at our YouTube channel (click this link and it will take you to the Channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/PiratesoftheColumbia>). Having said that, our Leadership Council and Emergency Planning Team have already started conversations about how we will begin the process of returning to in person gatherings. We are still waiting on information about requirements for gatherings when that day comes. We may need to all make a habit of wearing masks or be especially careful about keeping distance. We may find that we need to observe limits on how many people we can allow in our building at one time, and for some of us who are especially at risk, we may need to continue participating in worship via a live stream. Just know that your safety is first and foremost in our minds and the procedures we will put in place will be there with the intent of making sure we are all safe at such gatherings.

2) Can you sew masks? As we begin the process for planning in person gatherings again, we are certain that having masks available for personal use will play a role somehow. We have set a goal of having 300 masks available when we start the process of returning to the church. (300 would be great even more would be fantastic!) If you can sew, (I know many of you already are sewing masks) would you be willing to begin making them for your church family? If you make 10 or more masks, just give us a call at the church (509 582-2163) or send us an email at office@kennewickfirst.com and we will let you know how we can come and pick them up in such a way to limit individual contact. Thank you in advance for helping this church that we love in this way! (If you need a pattern you can look here and get instructions: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>)

3) Would you like to be part of a team that helps us continue to use and maximize the video, sound and internet streaming abilities? In the last month we have made some HUGE advances in how we connect via technology. Filming and live streaming are things that we can do now on a consistent basis. Our plan is to continue using this technology to connect with people beyond the four walls of our sanctuary. When we return to "In Person" gatherings, running the sound system and microphones, the projection and video system on the screens in the sanctuary, running the camera to provide video links to the service and managing the internet stream are just too many jobs for one person to do. If you are middle school or older and would like to be part of a ministry team that learns how those systems work and volunteer your time on Sunday

mornings to operate those systems shoot me an email at mark@kennewickfirst.com and we will begin the process of putting that team to work!

4) Finally, I hate that I, from time to time, must give this warning! Some of you have received emails from someone who has created a fake email account that looks like a real email address saying something similar to “I need a favor from you, email me as soon as you, get this message”. If you reply, the scammer will try and get you to purchase gift cards for them saying it will go to help someone in need. If you get such an email, IT IS NOT FROM YOUR PASTOR! I will never ask you to provide passwords or purchase gift cards and give me the account information via an email. It breaks my heart that especially at times like this people will try and steal from people using the church as a cover. We saw a similar scam back in December. If you ever get an email from someone (Your Pastor or anyone) that asks you to buy gift cards and give them #'s over email that you can't contact over the phone or in person, know that it is a scam and notify your internet service provider as quickly as you can so that the email account of the scammer can be shut down.

Those are the latest things to keep you up to date on at KFUMC.

I'm reminded so often these days of the words Paul wrote to his friends in Rome (Romans 8:28) “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” In no way I am suggesting that the Covid-19 Pandemic is sent by God. But I am convinced that suffering, hardship and trouble are in no way bigger than the love of God. Even a Pandemic can be an opportunity for us to discover joy, compassion, justice and life in abundance that only come from God. Keep Loving God! ... Keep loving each other! ... and GO WASH YOUR HANDS!!

Be safe my friends!

Pastor Mark