

Hi friends,

I wanted to give you some good news. Last night our leadership council met and one of the things that we moved upon was the next step in our process of moving forward with our protocols regarding the pandemic we find ourselves in.

As you know, when we returned to in-person worship services several months ago, we made that step following a plan that we have had in place, which has been the model for many churches in our conference, following the advice of health experts and implementing best practices. One of the limits we chose to live within, making that decision to return to in-person worship services, was to ask that we not sing as a congregation during worship.

In accordance with our plan, we asked that everyone, regardless of vaccination status wear a mask while inside the building. We asked that family groups maintain a three-foot spacing between each other, and we limited the amount of time that we spent in enclosed places, and we provided sanitizing stations as we enter the sanctuary. In light of the recent progress we have seen in Benton and Franklin counties, and the falling numbers of new cases and hospitalizations due to the Covid-19 virus, our leadership council made the decision to move us forward and take the step to include congregational singing in our worship gatherings.

In order to make this happen we are asking that we increase our spacing of family groups from three-feet to six-feet. To help accomplish that we will be moving to an “every other pew” seating format. All of our other protocols of masks, sanitizing and limiting the amount of time we spend in enclosed spaces are still in place, but feel free to sing along and worship in song at our in-person worship gatherings.

While this is good news, we are acutely aware that for many, the threat of the virus to our health and families is very real. We are committed to making sure that for those for whom gathering in person is not a good option, we continue to provide a live stream format in which you can worship with us without being in person.

One more piece of good news! I was reviewing some statistical information about our church in preparation for our Leadership Council meeting and discovered something wonderful. Last Sunday our in-person attendance was over 80 individuals. Our online views of worship services are consistently between 65-80. Most of the online views are not individuals, but more than one person watching and participating in the worship service. The common accepted way to average online viewership is to multiply those “views” by 1.6. I give you these figures because even in the midst of all the limits, protocols and... stuff, more people are engaging with our church through worship on a regular basis than before the pandemic! It’s easy to get lost in chasing numbers and figures, but what that says to me is that who we are, and why we exist as a congregation still connects with and brings hope to people who are searching for avenues to love God and love their neighbor. That is good news!

Pastor Mark

Butter Braid Pick up today (Friday)
from 5-7 pm

To practice social distancing, Rachel Loomis our Youth Director will be at the church garage with your Butter Braids on **Friday, November 19th from 5:00-7:00 pm**. You will need to get your Butter Braids to a freezer as soon as possible after picking them up so they do not begin to thaw! If you cannot pick up your Butter Braids at the church on Friday, November 19th between 5:00 and 7:00 pm, please communicate with Rachel, the office, or the youth who sold you your Butter Braids to arrange an alternative.

nut bread, brown bread, bean soup, bean soup with cornbread mix, fruity rice mix, oatmeal raisin cookie mix, and chewy brownie mix. Items will need to be picked up at the church on December 11 from 10 am to 1 pm. Please support United Methodist Women as they raise funds for church, local, national, and international missions.

Decorating for Advent

Advent is right around the corner. The season of expectation begins on Sunday, November 28th and runs for four Sundays before Christmas Day. With that in mind, one of the amazing traditions Kennewick First has is preparing our historic sanctuary with Christmas and Advent decorations. We assemble the Poinsettia display in the sanctuary, hang banners and evergreen boughs, and decorate the sanctuary for this wonderful season of expectation. **On Sunday, November 21st** after worship services is completed, we will be gathering to decorate the sanctuary. Please join us in unpacking those decorations, assembling, hanging, and decorating our sanctuary for this very special season. We will be providing a simple lunch for the busy hands that make this task light. Please make plans to join us on the 21st to prepare our worship spaces with decorations that hold such wonderful meaning for our church and the community at large.

Adult gatherings during the Sunday School hour

There are several opportunities for adults to gather while the kids are participating in their Sunday School classes at the 9 am hour. Feel free to join in the book study that Jim Deatherage and Bob Kelly are leading in the Suzanna Wesley Room. If you are “Craftier” there is a group that meets in the Ida Payne Fellowship Hall making easy to create “Tie Blankets” to hand out to people who need them to keep warm during the Winter months, or if you like you can gather with a group of parents in the couch area of Wesleyan Hall downstairs and share a cup of coffee and conversation. These are great opportunities to grow in our faith and make friends. We hope you can find a spot to participate on Sundays before worship at 10 am!

Wednesday Morning Bible Study

The Wednesday morning bible study group has completed our study of the Book of Acts. We are going to take a break and beginning on December 1st, at 11 am, we will do a short four-week

study on the scripture passages that lead us up to the events of Christmas. Feel free to join us on the Zoom format on December 1st for this study with friends!

Sunday Morning Worship this
Sunday at 10 am

This Sunday Pastor Mark will finish his series on the Book of Job. We hope you can join us as we look through this ancient story that speaks to us so poignantly in the world we live in today. This week's passage will be focusing on Job 38:1-7. We hope to see you in worship on Sunday at 10 am and remember, if meeting in person is not the best choice for you, you can tune in live on our YouTube channel. Here is the link:
(<https://www.youtube.com/PiratesoftheColumbia>).