

# BE**TH**EL

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
*A People and a Place where God is made Known*

June 14, 2020

Dear Bethel Members and Friends,

I know there have been many changes in our lives. Our church community, which has been a foundation for many of us, has been forced to change. In these extraordinary times we are living, there are very few certainties, yet, there are some things upon which we can rely. We can trust in the love and providence of our God, and we can trust the gift of Christ's church to see us through difficult and trying times in our lives.

I know that these have been difficult months since we, at Bethel Presbyterian, suspended worship in our sanctuary. I know that some of you have been unable to worship, while others have been able to benefit from the video worship services posted online, and I know that we all long to be able to worship together. However, this transition will occur only if it can be done safely, and with minimal risk to the health of the members of our church family. That said, I can tell you that the Session of Bethel Presbyterian met today, and voted to open for in-person worship beginning Sunday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, at our usual worship time of 10:00 a.m.

I want you to know that this decision was made after much discussion and careful consideration, and I wish to thank the Worship Team and the Session for carefully weighing the benefits and the risks of gathering in person before making this decision. Coming together in the season of COVID-19 calls for changes in how we operate, so naturally there are guidelines and restrictions on how we will worship. Please read carefully and take the following into account if you plan to join us on July 12<sup>th</sup> and beyond.

1. Consider your health condition and if you do not feel well, or are experiencing symptoms of ill health, please stay home.
2. Please always wear a mask covering your mouth and nose when you are in the building.
3. If you need to use the elevator, enter through the kitchen door on the north side of the building and proceed up the elevator to the sanctuary level and into the sanctuary. Please limit use of the elevator to either individuals or family members at a time.  
If you do not need the elevator, please enter directly to the sanctuary using the northwest doors facing Vine Street and go directly up the stairs to the sanctuary.
4. At all times in the building and sanctuary, you will need to maintain social distancing of six feet, except in your household group. Every other pew will be tapped off, and there will be tape marking six foot spacing in the pews. Please use these as a guide as you choose where to sit during the service. In addition please do not congregate in any size group entering or exiting the sanctuary and building.
5. Your temperature will be taken, and hand sanitizer provided to you when you arrive at the sanctuary.

6. All bibles, hymnals, and other items will be removed from the pews. There will be no bulletin. All words and service information will be displayed on the screen during worship.
7. Our liturgy will be modified to limit singing and speaking in unison. You are encouraged to speak and sing softly, while wearing a mask, to reduce the potential of spreading contagions in the air.
8. During the service, we will not pass the peace, or pass the offering plates. Offering plates will be available as you exit the sanctuary.
9. After the service, you are asked to maintain safe distancing while you exit the sanctuary and the building. If you need the elevator, please wait in the sanctuary until it is available. If you wish to visit with other persons, please wait until you are outside the building and do so while maintaining safe distancing guidelines.
10. There will be no coffee or fellowship time available before or after the worship service.

I know that these are drastic changes to our Sunday morning experience, but these are in line with recommendations from the CDC, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and John Knox Presbytery. The Session and I believe that these modifications are necessary to protect the health and well-being of all members of our family, especially the more vulnerable among us.

We realize that these may not be enough to make everyone feel safe returning to in-person worship and encourage everyone to search their conscience and weigh the risks against their own well-being. If you decide to stay home, we honor and support your decision. I will continue to provide an on-line worship opportunity for those who are unable or unwilling to worship with us in-person.

As always, you may contact me at (563) 422-0518 or donjbest@gmail.com

May God bless you and keep you,

Pastor Don