



UPDATE:

The Path Forward

June 16, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Philippians begins with words of hope, *“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.”*

I share these words of Paul with you because they are true for me, as well. I continue to give thanks to God for your steadfast partnership in the Gospel. Congregation Council met on Monday, June 15. At that time, **we decided to continue with live stream worship and not begin to worship in person.** COVID-19 numbers are simply not moving in a positive direction and your safety is of paramount concern. We continue to follow the guidance of our Church, monitoring the information supplied by the TN Department of Health.

I know this is not what you want to hear. It is not what I want to tell you. But I remain convinced that it is in the best interest of our community to stay apart a little longer. There is some good news! **We are looking at resuming in person worship August 2 with a service of Quiet Communion** being added to our live stream services. This is assuming that COVID-19 numbers are moving in a downward trajectory by then.

As we get closer, you will receive detailed directions about how we will accomplish this. Since it has been a while, we'll also send you a video file showing you what everything will look like so there won't be any surprises!

Outside groups will be allowed back on campus a month following our resumption of in person worship. We want to make sure that we have our systems in place and operating smoothly before we introduce more folks back into the building.

SO – HERE IS THE RECAP:

- . No in person worship for the month of July.
- . Live stream options continue Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays.
- . Hopefully, Quiet Communion beginning in August. We can and will hold as many of these services as necessary to accommodate the need. We are limiting the congregation size to 50 people total at each service.
- . Outside groups allowed back in one month after congregation members – hopefully September.

And one last bit of good news!! The Outreach Committee is planning an outdoor event (with physical distancing and face coverings) at Rockland Park. Stay tuned for more information about that! Until we are back together – continue to pray for our congregation, our community, our country, and our world as we move through this pandemic. You have shown remarkable patience to this point – don't grow weary of doing what is right!! We aren't there yet, but we are getting closer! Stay strong – be prayerful – be well.

God's Peace-

Pastor Groce

The Rev. Lewis A. Groce

Pastor

St. Timothy Lutheran Church

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