



HOPE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Rev. Santina Poor, Pastor

July 30, 2020

To Our Hope UCC Family,

Our Covid-19 Task Force has been working hard to make sure that when the time comes, we can safely regather for in person worship. We have designed a plan we believe allows for this. Although the State of Illinois is currently in Phase 4 of our state's reopening plan which allows for gatherings of 50 or fewer people, Hope UCC's Church Council wisely determined that our church would wait to see how our local area is doing before setting a reopening date. Unfortunately, Rock Island County has been experiencing an increase in positive cases and hospitalizations; consequently, our date to gather for in person worship is pushed back until we have seen these numbers steadily decrease.

In the meantime, we have realized that many of the plans we have worked out on paper may look and feel very different when put into practice with people in the church building. So, we have asked two different groups of people from church to come on two separate Sundays so we can try out the plans in person. The first 'test' group were members of our Trustees Ministry who attended the July 26th service. We learned a lot with that first dry run. Our second group will attend worship on August 2nd. This group is made up of some of the folks in our congregation who have not been able to access any of the worship or fellowship activities via technology. They have relied solely on the paper materials mailed out each week. Our Covid-19 Task Force will implement new safety guidelines during this worship using lessons learned from the previous week. Undoubtedly there will be additional lessons learned and changes made to our reopening plans from this week's worship. Following the service on August 2nd, only Pastor Santina and her family, Ben (our accompanist), the liturgist (and his/her/their family members), and any special musicians will be in attendance for worship until later in August when the Task Force has another group in for an additional 'soft open' of the church.

This is truly an ongoing and evolving process. Because we want to faithfully ensure that we are doing our very best to maintain the safety and health guidelines for reopening, learning what is going to work and what is more challenging in the reopening process requires us to try things with smaller groups. If we tried to figure this all out the first Sunday that we are able to gather for in person worship, it would be a little messy and definitely would not be an example of caring for each other. We so wish that we could all gather again in person each Sunday. Although we cannot for now, we are blessed to be able to gather virtually as we journey in faith together.

We are grateful for your patience and grace with this process and for your understanding regarding waiting to resume in person worship. We ask that you continue to pray for the health and safety of our friends and neighbors, near and far, in our county and the surrounding areas, as well as for all those who have suffered such unimaginable loss of their loved ones during this pandemic.

With hope and faith,

Hope UCC's Covid-19 Task Force:

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