

Indiana Conference of The United Methodist Church

Message: A COVID-19 Update: Worship in Churches Suspended

Friends in Ministry,

We continue to face the hard truth that lives are at great risk by the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Even as people of faith, we are all too aware that this crisis is real. It is very real. And our call to be the Church to bring hope has never been needed more. At the same time, in responding to that reality, please be reminded that the first of our General Rules as United Methodists is to “Do no harm.” We are asked by the state and federal government to “stay at home,” which is a very necessary way to do no harm and to slow the spread of this pandemic.

To that end, while the essential work of worship continues in many different ways, **Bishop Trimble is expecting that in-person worship for ALL CONGREGATIONS IS SUSPENDED in our churches through the end of April.** (There is a possibility for public gatherings in the church in May, but that will be evaluated at a later date.)

As has been shared previously, alternative worship (Facebook, ZOOM, etc.) may be produced in compliance with the governor’s executive order (Executive Order 20-08, 14e - page 6), provided that it is done in compliance with current [CDC and local guidance on social gatherings](#). Simply put, it is not responsible nor safe for ANY public worship to be held in ANY of our church buildings, even on Easter Sunday.

We continue to be amazed by the creative ways so many of you are finding to be in ministry in this critical time. Please know that the Bishop and Extended Cabinet are in prayer for all of our pastors and congregations as together we share the message and hope of Jesus Christ in different and powerful ways in the days ahead.

Rev. Larry Whitehead

Executive Assistant to the Bishop & Director of Connectional Ministries