

5.6.20

Friends and Family of EMUMC:

The EMUMC Covid 19 Response Team met last evening. Directed by our Conferences' Guidelines for Returning to Church Gatherings," we are working to develop a plan that will ensure a safe Worship Experience at EMUMC. Our group unanimously decided that our efforts would be focused more on the "how we might safely return to church," rather than "when we might return."

We will be centering our attention on health and safety, re-imagining worship to include music/singing, Baptism, Holy Communion, the probability of split services, and other ideas. We strongly feel that Virtual Worship should continue even after we return to church.

As your pastor, I can no sooner predict when we will return to church than can our Governor or Bishop, both of whom clearly support the idea that says "one size DOES NOT fit all." Therefore, local conditions, virus testing, hot spot identification, local church readiness, Conference directions, and other factors will ultimately decide when we return to church.

Having met with members from the medical field, the world of finance, building maintenance, worship leaders and others, I am convinced that the target date of June 14th as set forward by our Bishop may well be an overly optimistic goal for EMUMC.

As a gentle reminder, when we put together our budget for 2020 in October of 2019, no one had ever heard of "Covid 19." Obviously, no money was budgeted for the overwhelming cost that we will incur in our efforts to sanitize our building during this ongoing struggle. Needless to say, we need your continued financial support to move forward in our efforts at safely reopening EMUMC. Without that support, we can and will not succeed.

Pastoral ready begun in-building worship. This is certainly their right, and we make no judgement as to their decision. We pray their response to our steps toward reopening will be respected as well. We are all in this together. Our goal, to introduce people to Christ, is the same. Again...I agree with our Governor and Bishop, one size does not fit all.

Finally friends, I find comfort in the message found in the Gospel of John, Chapter 1, Verse 5:

What came into existence was Life,
and the Life was Light to live by.
The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;
the darkness couldn't put it out.

And so, as our Bishop always reminds us, "Be Encouraged."
I echo his words by saying, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, Jesus is coming back."

With more love and respect than a heart can hold,
Pastor Scott Bell