

August 29, 2020

Dear NPUMC Family,

We are getting closer to our anticipated return to in person worship, so I wanted to give you an idea of the progress that we have made. Thank you to those of you who responded letting us know of your plans to return to in-person worship. There are several outstanding responses. Those we have received have been very helpful, and as anticipated, the numbers are pretty low.

We are on track for in person worship Sunday, September 13. If, however, the temperature is 75 degrees or higher by 8:30, please do not come to the church. The sanctuary is extremely hot, and we are unable to run air conditioners or fans. For the time being, check the weather before you put on your Sunday best, or shoes to go with your new stay at home wardrobe.

The Reopening Task Force has been hard at work these last weeks, making plans, cleaning, reorganizing, determining new space capacities, crafting signage, and working on the details of access for the groups who call our space home. It's been a busy time.

As I have said in prior letters and conversations, the experience of being in the building will be very different. Most of the building is not going to be accessible. Having worked to thoroughly clean and sanitize the spaces, we want to do our best to keep them that way – because any space that is entered, even briefly, must be sanitized again.

Here are two ways you can help:

- First, if an area is blocked off in some way, please take the blockage seriously. One of the wonderful things about a church space is that it comes to feel like home to many people. Sadly, we cannot inhabit the building in that way right now.
- Second, many of our ministries have used our church as a holding space for items looking for a home – food, clothing, housewares. At this time, we simply cannot use the building for this type of ministry. If there are ways outside the building to facilitate those efforts, we want to support them, but our guidelines from the Conference are clear, and we must adhere to them.

There are, indeed, silver linings to every cloud. The church looks incredible! The weeks of hard work by the Reopening Task Force have been a blessing to us all. There is something warm and inviting about a clean space. It does not make up for needing to keep our 6 feet of space, but it doesn't hurt, either. As our online 'we' has grown, I am mindful that we could see many new faces whenever we are able to congregate again. How wonderful to have a house in great shape into which we will welcome new people.

Stay healthy and in touch, everyone. And keep your thinking caps on for what our socially distanced greeting is going to be. I'm still partial to 'Wakanda Forever,' but there are some other candidates as well.

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Jenn