

Hi Friends,

There are a couple things I want you to be aware of as we come to the end of the week. If you read your weekly email from the church last Friday, I spelled out how KFUMC is systematically and strategically looking at the things we do, like worship and Christian education service ministries etc.... and how we can begin the process of moving back to doing those things in a greater capacity. Our Emergency Planning Team has been working in sub-groups to identify policies and procedures to help us return to some of our normal life together. BUT, I want to make a couple things clear for all of us. The process will take time, we will not just reopen the doors to have us all return on Sunday morning with hugs, handshakes, singing and sharing cookies and coffee. Especially for our large Sunday morning worship gatherings things will look different as we step back into patterns together. Masks will be the norm, we will need to limit our attendance in parts of the building to maintain safe distancing, possibly using some of our large areas like the Sanctuary, Youth Chapel and Ida Payne gymnasium for simultaneous gatherings. Congregational music will need to be done in different ways. Of course, a policy and program to clean and sanitize the building is extremely important. Even how we enter and exit the building will be re-examined in the next couple of weeks.

As we put that plan together, I would ask you for your patience and understanding. Safety for all of us who participate in the life of our congregation and being faithful to who and what we are called to be as a church are our primary goals. Loving God and loving our neighbor, while doing no harm is our standard. There is a tendency in our culture today to divide people into camps. I've been amazed at how creative people can be in the lines and tools used to divide people: political party, race, gender, conservative or progressive, socio-economic status, hair color, sport bike or cruiser, truck or sedan, Nike or Adidas.. even Fred Meyer or Target. It seems silly, but all of these examples I listed are real dividing lines I have seen people use in social media and other places to make moral judgments, impugn character and argue that it is "us vs them."

I know that the ever changing situation we find ourselves in, the new way we will have to live our life together as a church, and the sacrifices we are being called to make are all stressful, but I urge you to treat one another with care, generosity and grace. Pray for one another. I am reminded of the passage from John 13:34-35, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Remember that we will be worshipping together via our YouTube channel on Sunday at 10:30 am, and celebrating Pentecost – "the birthday of the church" (Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/user/PiratesoftheColumbia>)

Have a great week my friends,

Pastor Mark