

Dear Fellow Church Members and Friends:

Several months ago, a task force was formed to study and plan for how and when we will resume in-person worship services, and the re-opening of our beloved church building.

The Phasing Forward Task Force is comprised of the church officers (Vice President Joe Aresco, Clerk Marcie Clark, Treasurer Jenn Renk and Assistant Treasurer Jan Poet, President Jeannette Hodge), Diaconate chairperson Mike Enright, Music Board Co-chair Lindsey MacDonald, Christian Education Board chairperson Sandie Lavoy, Past President Diane Burgess, Pastor Jane Hawken, Music Director Kasha Breau, and Christian Education Director Ann Labby. The task force has met several times via Zoom videoconference, and individual members have completed background readings and guidance documents, as well as specific assignments independently. The task force has engaged in intense discussions about how to safely phase forward to reopening the church building, and presented a report and recommendation at the August church council meeting.

The Church Council endorsed the report presented by the Phasing Forward Task Force, and supported the recommendation that the church building will remain closed until at least mid-October, with a reassessment at that time to determine next steps. While arriving at this decision has not been easy, we did so after careful consideration of what we believe to be in the best interest of the health and well-being of our congregation and the community at large. The full report of the task force details what we considered when preparing the report for Council consideration. [The report as presented to the Church Council is available by clicking on this link.](#)

Being apart one from another has been difficult for our church community over the past six months. As we move into the fall, this is a time when under normal circumstances, we would be gathering for Celebration Sunday, church school would be resuming, the choir would be returning after summer break, and the building would be abuzz with activity. But this year is different ... the building is quiet, there are no in-person activities, and we are worshipping at home rather than in our beautiful church sanctuary. We have an opportunity to embrace the changes that have been thrust upon us, as we find new ways “to be the church when we can’t go to church”.

How can we sustain our community of faith during these times? We need your ideas. We have held a few Bible study classes, a book group and numerous meetings via Zoom. In the coming month, we’ll be looking to offer some opportunities to gather

remotely for fellowship and conversation. Watch for a September calendar of events in an upcoming weekly message.

As I close this week, it is with a feeling of incredible gratitude to the Phasing Forward Task Force members who have spent many hours working on a most difficult task. Their dedication to the task at hand has been extraordinary.

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