

WUMC Informational Update June 09, 2020

Sisters and brothers of Weaverville United Methodist Church,

Our church leadership is closely listening to the guidance provided by both the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and from the Western North Carolina United Methodist Church Bishop's office. Following the direction from the Bishop's office, United Methodist churches in Western North Carolina will not conduct onsite services until at least the end of June. Currently there is not a target date for when we will return to onsite worship services.

We know that some of you are ready to return to full worship, others are looking to a modified worship experience and others prefer to continue with online worship services. Bishop Leeland's office has provided the following guidance: "As faithful disciples of Jesus Christ in the midst of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we remain committed to our biblical mandate to "love our neighbors as ourselves" and our Wesleyan call to "Do no harm. Do all the good we can. Follow the ordinances (stay in love) with God." In doing so, we seek ways to engage faithfully in worship, study, and ministry while ensuring the health and safety of our members and communities as our first priority." In alignment and compliance with public health guidance, governmental mandates, and our scriptural and Wesleyan call to "love others" and "do no harm", the guidelines are to be followed by churches in the Western North Carolina Conference. These will be effective Saturday May 23, 2020 and will remain in effect until at least June 30, 2020." Once we receive updates from the conference, this information will be passed on to you.

In order to help clarify our current policies regarding worship opportunities and church use policy, this brief document has been approved by the SPRC and Church Council to be implemented by all WUMC facility users. It will be updated as needed, with the next update anticipated around June 30, 2020.

A number of worship opportunities are currently available to WUMC members and attendees and detailed in the weekly *Twizzler*. Online worship services will

continue for the foreseeable future. Additional worship experiences are also currently being explored by staff and leadership team members. We welcome your input.

Additionally, service opportunities with appropriately administered health and safety procedures implemented will continue to be available for those who wish to participate. Examples are the Congregations 4 Children (C4C) Summer Lunch Program (Black Locust Trailer Park), ABCCM food/essential goods drive, etc. Additional opportunities will be highlighted in the *Twizzler*.

The Church Council has heard that some of our small groups may want to explore opportunities to meet. This is for groups of 10 or less in attendance.

This effort was undertaken by a WUMC multidiscipline focus group. They have produced a Covid-19 for small group and outdoor worship procedure document which has been approved by the Church Council. This guidance document addresses multiple issues including social distancing, required personal protective equipment, facilities locations available for such meetings, cleaning procedures, interaction restrictions, the health and safety of all members of the congregation, etc.

Within the church there are multiple stakeholders to consider including church members, visitors, groups that use our facilities, clergy and staff. We have similar and different legal responsibilities as we work with each of these groups.

Our church staff are important to us and we value their contributions, especially during this difficult time. In order to protect them and their families, **any** individual entering **any part** of the church facilities for **any reason** must complete the following:

1. Sign in on the Sign-In sheets available in the Fellowship Center, the Education Building and the Sanctuary.
2. You must sign in, print your name with phone number, date, time of entry and time of departure. Please take the pen (supplied) you use to sign in with you when you leave as an extra precaution.

In order to protect all church members, there are **no exceptions** to the sign in requirement for any individual entering any church building.

Your concerns and opinions are important to us as well. We have prepared an on-line survey for our members/attendees: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YC7JWJ9> We want to hear from you so that we can provide the worship experience and programs you deem critical for several months to come. This on-line survey is available for all members/attendees. Your answers will remain confidential and will be utilized by limited number of staff/leadership members to facilitate future plans consistent with our Christian mandate to “love our neighbors as ourselves.” Your input is critical as we seek ways to faithfully worship, learn and minister to others. Throughout this endeavor we must ensure the health and safety of our members and communities as our top priority.

We appreciate this is a difficult time for everyone. Many of us are suffering from information overload and worse yet conflicting information overload. Clarity is critical at this time and frequently complicated by the quick pace of change and the uncertainty of the pandemic path in our area. We are constantly monitoring UMC conference guidance as well as state, county and local information sources to determine the most appropriate path forward for Weaverville UMC.

We are grateful for your continued financial support. Your contributions are essential as we make preparations for continuing our mission as Weaverville United Methodist Church.

Again, your opinions and concerns matter. We look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Stay safe, Stay well,

Rev. Deval

Rev. Deval Mason
Pastor
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Bob

Bob Cipriano
Chair, Staff Parish Relations Committee

Additional information from the Western North Carolina Conference:

<https://www.wnccumc.org/newsdetail/phase-two-guidelines-for-in-person-worship-ministry-during-covid-19-14001045>