

# Update on Worship and the Pandemic

Oct. 14, 2020

Dear North Members and Friends:

Two weeks ago our nation marked the tragic milestone of 200,000 deaths due to the coronavirus. These are not normal times, and yet, with so many deaths, it seems as if we are becoming accustomed to it.

We are not in worship in a normal way because we want to keep you safe. In addition, the sanctuary stands empty as a witness. It is a public witness of our support for the common good. We can be inconvenienced in the practice of our faith so that we can promote health in our society.

Early in the pandemic, with the guidance of our board of directors and medical professionals in our congregation, I established the following criterion for expanding worship to include in-person services or additional participants: a decline in the two-week rolling average of new cases in Marion and the surrounding counties. Early in the summer this criterion was met and we reopened the 8:30 a.m. service. However, the number of new cases surged. Even when the numbers declined, there was not sufficient interest to continue that service. Currently the best one can say is that the average of new cases has not declined but remained steady at a higher level.

In the coming weeks we will continue to only offer a live stream of the 11 a.m. service. We will be making some modifications for additional musicians and guest speakers. Steps are being taken this week to rectify the problems with the sound and to install an additional camera to enhance your worship experience.

No one knows what the coming weeks and months hold, but we will continue to use prayerful discernment and sound information to make wise decisions. Thank you for your patience, your prayers, and your dedication.

Pastor Darren