

A Letter from Your Regathering Team

Dear St. Paul Friends,

Since our last update, our regathering team has met multiple times to discuss and begin to solidify ideas to gather again for public worship on our church property.

First of all, we are going to be holding our first ever Beach Blanket Worship on Sunday evenings at 6pm. These worship services will be a shorter service with a message by Pastor Michelle or Craig Bielke and music arranged by our director of non-traditional music John Posth. Gathering together on a Sunday evening in the fresh air with proper safety techniques is an exciting first step back into public gatherings in church life.

Secondly, we will be offering office hours each weekday. From 10am-2pm, our office staff will be available for you to make drop-offs, pick-ups, etc. We ask that you call ahead of time to arrange this visit, and please wear your mask. If you need to meet with any specific staff member, please call them to arrange the visit so as to make sure they are in the building.

Third, we are working on a video to welcome back our attendees to public worship in our sanctuary. In a spirit of joy, this video will introduce our congregants and visitors to the new processes of worship during this stage of COVID-19. Worship will look differently, yet we are excited that gathering again in the sanctuary is in our future.

As we mentioned in our last update, we continue to follow guidelines of the Illinois South Conference and the state of Illinois as well as consulting other guidelines to ensure everything is covered. With proper safety techniques like social distancing, masks, taking temperatures, avoiding group singing, and other

procedures we believe that we can take on these new steps safely.

As always, we use the word “tentatively.” If we see a spike in cases in this area or if the virus directly affects the church, we will pull back temporarily until gathering becomes safer again. We are grateful to God’s gift of medicine and science to be our guide as we move ahead with hope, faith, love, and joy.

Due to underlying health issues, we know that not everyone will feel safe attending public worship events. To be more inclusive of our members with health issues, we will also be streaming our outdoor services and, when the day comes, will be streaming our live worship from our building. Pastor Michelle will continue to hold fellowship Zoom events twice per week to continue the connection between all who feel safe to go out and those who do not.

As we mentioned last month, we continue to hold worship in a variety of platforms. Not only can you listen to worship on Jubilee 690 AM on Sundays at 9am and 9pm, but you can also watch the services on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/stpauluccbelleville/> as well as on our website [StPaulUCC.org](https://www.stpaulucc.org). You can participate in Zoom Fellowship Time on Wednesdays at 5pm or Sundays at 10am, and most days, Pastor Michelle connects with congregants on Facebook Live. For more information, contact the church at (618) 233-3303. Please see our contact below with any questions or concerns.

If you are someone who is not connected by the internet and would like to find ways to keep connected with St. Paul UCC, please give us a call. Pastor Michelle and the leadership team want you to feel as connected as possible to our church life.

If you need help understanding Facebook Live Worship, Zoom, YouTube, or how to connect to the internet, we have members who are willing to assist you in getting connected!

Thank you to everyone who has continued their offerings during this season and all who have participated in the many virtual meetings and gatherings we have hosted on Zoom!

Scripture indicates that it took some time for the Israelites to get settled into the Promised Land and for them to return from the Babylonian Exile. But in all of scripture, we see hope shining. And we see hope shining in our current world as well.

We will continue to keep you updated as decisions are made. Please keep our team in your prayers as we make the healthiest decisions possible for our congregation during this time.

Blessings,

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