

May 21, 2020

From: Pastor Allen

Dear Friends,

Earlier this week I was making some phone visits, and everyone asked the same question: *When will we hold open worship in the sanctuary again?* The responsible answer remains the same: *We don't know.*

This Tuesday night, Session will meet and talk about all our normal business, and among the routine things we discuss these days is the progression of the pandemic and the recommendations from our Emergency Response Team (which is keeping a very close eye on the latest reports and trends). While no one knows where that conversation will lead, indications are that we will continue online worship at least through June. Until we see a verifiable decline in the number of cases, *love for neighbor* will continue to require us to be patient with our circumstances and with each other. We simply can't afford to risk gathering a high-risk population for in-person worship.

A friend of mine shared a great image to help us think about how easily the coronavirus spreads: Imagine a Sunday School room full of five-year-olds. It's early December. Their teacher has a wonderful art project planned for them—they're going to make Christmas cards for shut-ins. When the kids enter the classroom, the teacher opens bottles of red, green, gold, and silver glitter. By the time Sunday school is over, how many kids will look like enormous sugar cookies covered with sprinkles? What will the table look like? What will the floor look like? What will the restrooms look like?

See where this is going?

The coronavirus is more contagious than glitter, and it's harder to clean up. I, for one, cannot encourage us to get together when there's just so much potential for "spreading the glitter." It may be that if people in our area suddenly get much more serious about practicing social distancing and wearing masks, we'll see enough of a drop in a couple of months to consider a partial re-opening. But go to a grocery store, or

Lowe's, or watch people in town on a Saturday afternoon and you'll see just how lightly people are taking the risk of infection. It seems that many people consider the virus as harmless as glitter, and that masks signal weakness rather than a strong love of neighbor and self.

While we're all tired of separation, we would forget that fatigue in seconds if we had to get used to losing people we love. I love all of you and want to keep on loving you. If you'd like to, mail me a greeting card. Cover it with Elmer's Glue and glitter. I'll open it and enjoy it. And when I quit finding glitter in my kitchen, I'll call you and thank you for it.

While you wait for me to call, do something constructive. Write a novel. Restore an old car. Become fluent in Urdu. I look forward to our call!

Peace Be with You All,
Pastor Allen

JPC Notes:

-It looks like Jeri may be going home next week. If you'd like to send her a card, go ahead and send it to her home address. (Please find it in the church directory.)

-*Thank You!* To the many seamstresses who have been making untold numbers of masks: Cathy Bickerton, Pat Bollman, Ann Florence, Susan Hagar, and Shirley Ratliff. Masks are supremely important these days. If you don't have a mask and would like one, please contact our parish nurse, Carol Jernigan. (Cell #: 901-485-4280). She will see that you get one.

Prayer Lists:

Church Members:

Evelyn Adams, Pam Dunn, Wilma Florence, Hal Knight, Charlotte McDonald, Jeri Paolini, Jill Sauceman, Bob Scheu, Richard Schwerdtfeger, Cheryl Smith, Tony Smith, Beverlee Wightman

On-going Prayers for Members:

Summer Buchanan, Sara Nan Byrd, Betty Correll, Joseph Dykes, Alisa & Barbara Goolsby, Elizabeth Hoss, Cherry Smith, Larry Smith, Ruth Verhegge

Church Prayer List of Family & Friends and Relatives

Faith Griffey and son-Cooper Brook Adolf (granddaughter and great-grandson of Jim & Charlotte Pahrís [*Update: Cooper is now at home.*])
Delbert Elliott, a friend of the DRC, Bobby Yarber (friend of Rebecca Comer)

May Birthdays:

Wayne Waskoski	1
Larry Childress	5
Neil Comer	6
Tracy Snapp	6
Beth Williams	9
Pat Wolfe	9
Elizabeth Huff	12
Gordon Edwards	13
Sara Nan Byrd	14
Rock Saylor	16
Joe Florence	26
Ida Shurr	27