



Friday, August 7, 2020

Dear FPCP Family and Friends,

This week has been a crazy week in the Campbell household. A new septic field and septic system was built in our backyard, which has meant that our yard has changed in appearance dramatically. It is too soon to say what our yard will ultimately look like because at this point all we can see is the chaos and the mess. But I trust our contractors. I know that with time, our yard will look 'normal'.

But let's be clear. Our house is not the only house under construction at this time. God's House is also changing. At the present moment, our church seems unrecognizable from what it was originally. With each new week, additional changes are made to help protect the health and safety of our members.

Last week, after meeting in very limited numbers for live worship, our COVID Task Force **made the difficult decision to return our church to on-line only services going forward throughout the month of August.** With the rising COVID rates within our local community and state, it was unanimously agreed that this is the very best way for us to love our neighbor and limit any harm we may cause our church family, our community and neighborhoods by meeting together.

The act of worship is essential to our faith. However, **it is not essential that our worship take place in our church building. By God's grace, we have other options, safer options, in which we can meet.** And although our live worship services are suspended and the church building currently remains closed for face to face meetings, the church itself is most definitely OPEN.

In many ways, as a church we are working harder than ever to provide additional mission opportunities to serve our community, as well as providing more ways to connect through on-line Bible Studies, prayer meetings, and educational opportunities which will be announced in the coming weeks.

We appreciate your prayers for our church and its staff throughout this process. **We will reopen for live worship services and for building use when it is safe and healthy for us to reconvene.**

As of now, our church's Thrift Shop will remain open and although many have asked how can that be when the church is closed, the customers and volunteers in the shop do not gather together in one room or share in one liturgy as you do in worship. There is freedom to move within the Thrift Shop's many rooms and unlike church, there is no on-line safer option for this mission and ministry. The Thrift Shop will continue to follow best health and safety practices and follow all government guidelines.

In terms of additional mission opportunities, you should know that our church is holding a backpack drive for Foster Children returning to a new school year in Michigan. There is a list on our church's website and in our Friday email detailing all the items needed for these students at their various grade levels. **This collection will be held on Thurs., Aug 20 from 1 pm - 6 pm in the church parking lot. If it is easier, you can send a check made out to FPCP (memo line: *backpack*)** to provide money for us to purchase a backpack for the most needed age.

Finally, friends, one last announcement, **our church will be holding a congregational meeting via Zoom on Sunday August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11 a.m. (two weeks from now). The purpose of this meeting is to elect a new Class of Elders and Deacons.** The list of nominees who have agreed to serve if so elected is found on our church's website and is in our Friday email.

**In order to make this Zoom vote valid, we need a minimum of 80 people** to attend this Zoom gathering so we need members of the church to pre-register for this meeting by providing their name and email on the church website. We will send you the Zoom invitation link on the Friday prior to the congregational vote. Please mark your calendars now for Sunday August 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11 am for this brief but important church meeting.

Friends, there is little doubt that the life of our church is under construction. We are all learning how to cope with the chaos and mess. We are also learning how to serve God and worship God in new ways. Thanks be to God for His ongoing building work.

Your pastor,

*Emily*