

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and peace to you as we not only find ourselves preparing for Thanksgiving, but also for the season of Advent, which begins this Sunday.

I'd like to take a brief moment of your time to give you an update on where we stand in regards to the COVID-19 pandemic and our ability to worship indoors.

The Ad Council and I met yesterday after our church service to update one another on where we are and how we feel we are doing in terms of our caring for one another during this time. We shared strengths, fears, and hopes, all the while thinking about how we at Mancelona UMC can continue to provide a safe worship space for everyone.

As of right now, our plan is to continue to gather in-person for worship every Sunday at our usual time (11am). We will continue to be vigilant about checking temperatures upon entry, not singing, and wearing masks. We are also committed to keep the services a bit shorter to continue to reduce any potential exposure time. In addition, we have developed a rudimentary contact tracing system, so should an exposure occur, we have the ability to inform whoever we must.

While we are committed to meeting together in-person, we are taking worship on a week by week basis, and are ready to move to drive-in style once again should the need arise. Should an outbreak or exposure occur, or should the schools continue to remain closed past their set reopening date of December 8th, we will reevaluate our position on indoor worship at that time.

Meanwhile, there are a host of other things we all can do to ensure the safety of ourselves and those around us. We encourage the following:

- All members are encouraged to continue wearing masks whenever in public.
- All members, if medically able, are encouraged to get their flu shots if they haven't already gotten them.
- Though we take temperatures upon entry to the church building, we also encourage all members to check their temperature before leaving the house, and to refrain from coming to worship should you feel unwell or show any potential COVID-19 symptoms.
- Continue to pray. Pray for those in the scientific community working tirelessly on vaccines. Pray for those in governmental positions that they might be guided to make good decisions regarding how to help their constituents. Pray for the frontline workers and hospital staff. Pray for those whose families have been affected by COVID-19, and for those who have lost loved ones.

Our ability to continue to worship in-person together is directly tied to how serious we are about caring for ourselves and for others, especially as case numbers around the country and in our own area continue to rise. Should you ever feel insecure about attending a service, we will still be posting videos on various social media platforms:

- Head over to the Mancelona United Methodist Church Facebook page each Sunday beginning at 8am for the week's worship videos, including a music video, a scripture reading video, and the weekly message from Pastor Bryan.
(www.facebook.com/mancelonaumc)
- Mancelona UMC also has a YouTube channel where Pastor Bryan posts the weekly message every Sunday morning (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtVyUz9pl0EK0Jv-ulT4XFA>)
- The easiest way to access these pages without searching for them is to visit the church website (mancelonaumc.org), where you can find links to both pages at the bottom of the home page
- Feel free to pass this information along to anyone you think might utilize it, and feel free to follow and like our Facebook page, follow and subscribe to our YouTube Channel, so you can receive notifications whenever a new video is posted.

Continue to show your love of God through the fruits your faith produces, while loving your neighbors with every word or action, both this day, and through all the days to come.

Pastor Bryan (with the approval of the Ad Council)