

Dear Church Family,

The past several months have challenged and stretched us as we navigate unprecedented terrain in the life of our county, community, and congregation. The circumstances surrounding COVID-19 have asked us to prioritize the health and safety of the most vulnerable among us, to show the love of neighbor in our actions as well as our words, and to create, experiment, and innovate how we “do and be the church.” I am grateful for you as we have together adapted and changed our worship and our ministry as St. John’s UCC.

At our June Consistory meeting, we voted on the next phase of our regathering plan. It brings me great joy to share with you that we will begin outdoor worship on Sunday, July 5 at 10 am. We will gather on the lawn outside of the sanctuary, on the Labyrinth side of the church. In the event of rain, we will gather in the Sanctuary. We ask that you bring your own lawn chairs and your own communion elements with you to this service. Please carefully read this email for details about what to expect and how we are regathering while continuing to prioritize health and safety.

- Bulletins for services will be created and available on our website. Members are encouraged to bring their own bulletins from home. A “greeter” will wear gloves and pass out bulletins to those who desire a bulletin and did not bring one. Bulletins should be taken home or recycled at the end of the service.
- The Order of Worship has been modified to reduce congregational singing.
- Masks are strongly recommended to be worn while in worship, including when outside.
- Social distancing should be observed when attending and leaving the service.
- The Deacon-In-Charge will dismiss people at the end of the service.
- We will celebrate Holy Communion together. We ask that you bring your own elements (BYOE) from home (bread and juice) and we will also have pre-packaged cups available.
- Offering will be collected at the end of the service with a basket provided for such giving. Those persons not in attendance are encouraged to mail their offering or utilize means of electronic giving.
- Fellowship and Coffee hour is not available before or after the service.
- We will not be offering nursery and toddler care at this time. We ask that families remain in family units during worship.
- Children’s Time will be modified as needed by the Director of Children and Youth.
- Masks and hand sanitizer are available. Greeters will point these out to those attending services.
- Greeters will wear gloves to disinfect surfaces and pick up any items left after the service.
- We ask that you use the restrooms close to Fellowship Hall and utilize the hand sanitizer station located in the back lobby when in the building.

While we greatly look forward to regathering for worship, we also know that not everyone will be able to or feel comfortable attending services at this time. Pre-recorded worship services will continue to be offered and shared via YouTube (as we have been doing). The online service will be available on Sunday mornings at 10 am. Links to access these services will be posted on our church website.

I also encourage you to mark your calendars for our very first Saturday Night outdoor worship service on Saturday, July 11, 5:30 pm. This service will also meet on the lawn by the Labyrinth, with the same guidelines for that service as listed the in-person services on Sunday mornings.

We look forward to the surprises, joys, and blessings that come with taking this next faithful step. “Holy Experiment 3.0” begins!

Peace,
Pastor Caroline