

Greetings St. Andrews Family,

In the midst of change, God remains.

In March of this year many of us imagined that we would all be returning to our regular schedules and activities in a few weeks. We are now recognizing that resuming gatherings and activities in the community, and in our church facilities, will need to happen in phases.

St. Andrews UMC is committed to taking steps to nurture the spiritual well-being of our members while working to ensure their physical well-being. Governor Cooper previously announced a three-phase plan for churches returning to in-person gatherings:

- Phase 1 - began May 8th with very limited difference from our current practices
- Phase 2 - began May 22nd and runs through at least June 26th
- Phase 3 - projected to begin June 26th unless Phase 2 is changed or extended

In all likelihood we will be responding to Covid-19, or its successor viruses, for quite some time. Without a doubt, our practice of “physically gathered church” is being altered by this experience. We cannot say what the future holds; we can only continue looking to the One who holds the future. By God’s grace, we will continue trusting that God’s Spirit will supply the guidance, comfort, and strength we need to be faithful in our following. So, in the short-term, our church leadership has prayerfully determined the first steps on our way forward as we continue discerning God’s preferred future.

While we yearn to move back to our previous normal, the Task Force has begun meeting to discern an appropriate new normal. With resources provided by the Center for Disease Control, The Office of the Governor and the Bishop of the NC Conference of the United Methodist Church, this Task Force is prayerfully working to meet the needs of our membership, keeping in mind that we are a community of believers with many individuals in the highly vulnerable category. We need to protect these folks first. Without testing, we don’t know if we, ourselves, are carriers. One wrong decision could mean a life. In addition, supply chains have been compromised and we will not be receiving the sanitizers, disinfectants and personal protective equipment we have ordered for many more weeks.

Let us remember that John Wesley had three rules for living:

1. Do no harm
2. Do all the good you can
3. Love God

The following is a tentative guideline, which is subject to change depending on what unfolds, as this situation is in a constant state of flux. In that spirit, we offer the following suggested guidelines:

Phase 1 is complete:

- Sunday Worship was offered virtually via YouTube.
- We adhered to the practice of no in-person gatherings. Bible studies, Sunday School classes, Children and Youth ministry activities, and Committees met via Zoom.

- We encouraged everyone to participate in the Small Group virtual live daily update gatherings offered to experience connection throughout the week.
- The Church Office was closed, with our Administrative Assistant in office answering the phones. The office was not open to the general public.

During Phase 2, we are working toward greater connections as follows:

- Drive-In Worship began May 24th and will continue as long as participation continues.
- We will continue to celebrate worship virtually via YouTube and live streaming on Facebook (*Saint Andrews United Methodist-Garner is our Facebook page; links to online worship and Vann's daily message can be found on our new website at www.saintandrewsumc.org*)
- We will continue the daily messages and devotions on Facebook and YouTube.
- We will continue the practice of no in-person gatherings for Worship, Sunday School, Bible Studies, Children and Youth ministry activities, Small Groups, and Committees meetings. These groups will continue to meet virtually.
- The Church Office will continue to be closed, with our Administrative Assistant in office answering the phones. The office will not be open to the general membership or the public.

In Phase 3, we will be working toward even greater connections while following the guidance of the Center for Disease Control, Bishop Hope Ward and the Office of the Governor. Without knowledge of what that guidance will be at this point, please know the following:

- We hope to begin offering in-person worship and study gatherings in Phase 3 or beyond once we feel it is safe to do so and we have the necessary sanitizing and personal protective equipment supplies in place. All in-person activity will include safe-distancing, frequent hand washing and sanitizing, and other personal protective measures (such as face masks). The worship services themselves will look and flow differently based on recommendations for places of worship.
- We will continue to offer worship online for those who do not feel comfortable worshipping in person and/or are vulnerable members via Live Streaming.
- We will resume normal church office hours, with staff members over age 60, or those having underlying conditions, encouraged to limit their access to others while practicing safe distancing and wearing masks in the office setting.

Thank you for your faithfulness and encouragement as we take the best next steps together.

Lisa Anthony, Chairperson of Administrative Council
 Parker Watson, Lay Leader and Chairperson of Ministry Council
 Cathy Olsen, Chairperson of Staff-Parish Relations
 Merlin Young, Chairperson of Trustees
 Claude Jenkins, Chairperson of Finance
 Vann Spivey, Lead Pastor
 Iris Senzig, Chairperson, Safety Committee
 Stacy Thomas, Director, Children's Ministries
 Sarah Cope, Immediate Past Chairperson of Administrative Council
 Doug Harwood, Past Chairperson of Administrative Council & current Worship Coordinator
 Sarah Carey, Nurse
 Evelyn Tay, Nurse
 Ardys Sandell, Retired Methodist Minister