



Flossmoor Community Church

Where Christ is Central and Diversity is Cherished

July 15, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of Flossmoor Community Church,

Greetings to each of you! Now that many of us have acclimated to gathering on Zoom, we give thanks for its unforeseen benefits:

- seeing smiling faces, rather than the back of heads in pews, or behind a mask,
- small group break-out sessions which have allowed spontaneous conversations with those we may have not otherwise met during Passing of the Peace or Fellowship Time,
- seeing Pastor Julie from a “front row pew”, comfy in our own homes.

Some of you have been asking, “When will things be back to “normal”? Unfortunately, current conditions indicate that our old “normal” is not coming back anytime soon.

To ensure our safety, gatherings for the foreseeable future will require masks, extra sanitation, and physical distancing, preferably outside where air can freely circulate. Entrances and exits will need to be choreographed; we cannot congregate in hallways. Children cannot play together. Singing together as well as responsive readings are particularly risky behaviors. Even with precautions, those of us who are health-compromised or of advanced age should continue to stay at home. As the rest of the world reopens, each new phase brings new opportunities for contagion. If the virus gets to any of us, all of us gathered will be at risk.

After pondering these realities, the Church Leadership Staff and the Governing Board have settled on a path for the rest of this year.

- *We will not return inside the church building for worship as a full congregation for the remainder of 2020.* We will only gather as a congregation when all of our faith family can be safely present and a part of this tender reunion.
- *We will explore the creative opportunities our current situation enables: how we can live into our faith and service using new technologies?* Charting this course frees us of the multi-faceted financial, health, and safety complexities of physically regathering, as well as the potential for re-closure due to outbreak. This plan enables us to invest our time and energy in Job One: How we are called to be the voice, heart, and hands of God in this time and place. Let the Spirit lead and our creativity flow!

- *We can now imaginatively explore small gatherings where they can safely serve our larger purpose.* Sometimes Zoom calls just aren't enough! We will look for ways to answer those needs safely and responsibly as we unite to live out our faith and mission in meaningful, impactful ways.

This was a difficult decision to make, and hours were spent in researching and discussing the challenges and possibilities of safely gathering. While we mourn the loss of our physical connections to one another in worship and in fellowship, we also celebrate the strength, resilience and hope the congregation has exhibited in our time of transition. We are excited to place our primary focus on discovering new opportunities for connection as we head into the fall and will be looking forward to hearing your ideas and suggestions as we lean into a new way of being a church family. We will all be a part of the ever-evolving story of Flossmoor Community Church.

We are aware that other churches are making different decisions about reopening. Each congregation is unique and as part of the Body of Christ, we pray for all congregations during this challenging time. We believe we have made the best decision for the people of Flossmoor Community Church and our community.

Please let us know what you might need. Let us know also how you would like to help. We miss you! We love you! We are here for you!

May blessings pour forth on every household, on our community, and on our world,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'A Carvalho'.

Anna Carvalho
Governing Board Chair