



CLINTON

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Dear Clinton UMC Family,

2020 has been an unprecedented year of unexpected events, changes, and loss... driven mostly by the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last 9 months, we have sought to make decisions regarding our church's response to COVID concerns based on:

- *Jesus' command for us to love our neighbors as ourselves.
- *Methodist founding father John Wesley's rules for Christian living to:
 - 1) do no harm
 - 2) do good
 - 3) stay in love with God.
- *Recommendations from our national, state, and local public health officials.

We all are aware that the COVID-19 situation in our community is changing rapidly in a negative way. In addition, we are learning daily of more and more of our congregation who have tested positive for COVID-19, some of whom are not doing well. Please keep all of those people in your prayers.

Our state and county public health officials are urging us to continue to be vigilant in what we all can do to protect ourselves and those around us from contracting the virus. These things include: wearing face coverings, social distancing, and not congregating indoors whenever it is possible.

Yesterday we received guidance and direction from the Missouri UMC Conference and our District Superintendent to continue monitoring the situation in our communities, keep up-to-date with what health officials at all levels are communicating, and to act accordingly. In addition, for churches that have gone back to in-person worship, the Conference and District Superintendent have told us that when re-thinking what we are doing, we are to err heavily on the side of safety.

As a result of all of this, it is the unanimous decision of the church staff team that beginning Friday, November 20, we should close the building to in-person church activities. I've had conversations with other church leaders and all of them are in agreement that it is the right thing for us to do at the current time.

Beginning this Sunday, our worship will go back to an all virtual service (online and radio only). We will be working with any adult Sunday School classes and small groups that were meeting in-person to help offer virtual options for those groups. Moving forward we will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation in our community and re-evaluate what we are doing as needed.

I know that for many of you, as it is for me, this is frustrating and disappointing. I will miss greatly the opportunity to see people face-to-face on Sunday mornings. Thank you for your patience and understanding in this matter. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to let me know (660-525-4422, steveblacksher@clintonumc.net).

Finally, I would ask that you please be in prayer for our congregation, our leaders, and our people. This is an unprecedented time in our world, nation, community, and church. Please pray for God to partner with all that we can do as human beings to keep us safe and bring an end to the pandemic as soon as possible. Please pray that we keep our connection with Christ, the church, and one another strong. And please pray that we can live more fully into our mission "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!"

Your partner on the journey,
Steve Blacksher

**ALSO SEE OUR FACEBOOK LIVE VIDEO BY STEVE TUESDAY NOVEMBER 17th
ON THE CHURCH'S FACEBOOK PAGE WITH THE SAME INFORMATION**