

Dear Members and Friends of the Alden and Harvard: First United Methodist Churches,

As we prepare to open the church doors to regular Sunday worship, we want you to know that we are following the guidelines set by both the State of Illinois and the Northern Illinois Conference of the UMC. We seek to be fearless with our faith, but not reckless. When you return, you will find that church will not be just the same as you experienced before the pandemic, but we hope that you will enjoy the spirit lifting experience of worshipping together once again. We realize that not everyone will be comfortable returning to church right away. We respect your choice and welcome your return when you are ready. On-line worship services will be continuing. The following guidelines and requirements are what we are putting into place now, but may be updated as necessary moving forward.

Here is what you can expect for now:

- **Do not come to church if you or a family member are unwell.**
 - Do not come if you or a family member have had a fever in the last 72 hours
 - Do not come if you have a cough, sore throat, or are experiencing shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell.
- **Masks are required for everyone over the age of two years. They must be worn over both your mouth and nose at all times.** If you have a health condition that prevents you from wearing a mask, please make Pastor Eric aware.
 - A *limited* number of disposable masks will be available if you have forgotten yours or for guests so please try to remember to bring yours
- The service will be shorter (approximately 30-45)
 - There will still be music, but no congregational singing.
 - There will be a Prelude and Postlude and some service music
 - A song leader will sing (like special music) in place of congregational singing.
 - There will be no pew bibles, hymnals, or bulletins. Doors will be propped open.
 - Pastor Eric will preach from the pulpit
 - We will not pass a microphone during “joys or concerns.” If you have one to be shared, Pastor Eric’s cell phone number will be on the screen. You can text him your joys or concerns or you may email them to Pastor Eric before Sunday so that he may voice them for you.
- Social distancing will be maintained.
 - Every other row of the pews will be used
 - Households may sit together, but anyone who is not part of your household should sit 6 ft. from one another in the pew.
 - Observe social distancing from the parking lot until you are seated.
- Hand sanitizer will be available if needed.
- No nursery will be available for the young children, but we would like young children to join us in worship. It’s ok if they make noise or fuss...it will not bother anyone.
- Offerings may be placed in the plate or box as you enter or exit.

- There will be no after church fellowship time or refreshments.
- The usher will release the rows from the back of the church moving forward so everyone can exit safely from the church.
- We encourage you to use the restroom at home before you arrive or after church.
 - o Our bathrooms will be open, but limited to *one person* in use at a time.
 - o Wash your hands and use disinfectant products on surfaces you came into contact with.
 - o If there is a line, please maintain social distancing

In summary, these are the most important things we ask of you:

- Do not come to church if you or a family member are unwell.
 - o Do not come if you or a family member have had a fever in the last 72 hours
 - o Do not come if you have a cough, sore throat, or are experiencing shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell.
- Wear your masks.
- Observe social distancing from the parking lot until you are seated.

If you have any questions, please feel free to discuss them with members of our church health team. We thank you for helping us make returning to worship as comfortable and safe as possible for everyone.

The Alden and First United Methodist Church Health Team