

Dear Members and Friends of the First United Methodist Church of Harvard and Alden UMC

As we enter into the month of July, the State of Illinois has moved into Phase 4 of its reopening plan. Following the guidelines set by both the State of Illinois and the Northern Illinois Conference of the UMC, **we will be reopening First United Methodist Church of Harvard & Alden UMC for Joint Outdoor Worship on July 5<sup>th</sup> at 10am.** We plan to continue worshipping outdoors, weather permitting, throughout the month of July at 10am before possibly resuming worship in the sanctuary in August or September. Online worship services will continue to be offered for those who do not feel comfortable returning to church, or in case of a weather related cancelation of outdoor worship. They will be emailed just as they are now in the same format.

What will Outdoor Worship look like on July 5<sup>th</sup> and beyond? One worship service will take place for both churches in the lawn on the South West Side of First UMC at 10am. A few chairs (socially distanced) will be set up to sit at the edge of the South West circle drive for those unable to walk stably in the grass due to mobility issues or walkers/wheelchairs. Everyone else will be invited to set up lawn chairs or a blanket in one of the pre-painted and properly distanced areas in the lawn.

A set of expectations for maintaining everyone's health and safety are listed below that we expect all who attend to follow. The following guidelines and requirements are what we are putting into place now, but may be updated as necessary moving forward.

**First and Foremost:**

- 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 persistent cough, sore throat, or are experiencing shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell.

**Things to bring with you:**

- A lawn chair or blanket to sit on. You may also bring and set up (in advance of service) a small camping canopy to provide shade if you wish.
- Your Face mask.
  - o Masks are required while in the parking lot for everyone over the age of two years.
    - A *limited* number of disposable masks will be available if you forget or for guests.
  - o Once you have found a "seating area," we strongly encourage you to continue wearing a mask.
- Your bulletin which will be emailed prior to the service that you printed out before coming or brought with you on your mobile device.
  - o The bulletin will also be available for download from [www.firstumcharvard.org/bulletin](http://www.firstumcharvard.org/bulletin)

**Things to expect when you arrive and during the service:**

- Social distancing will be maintained.
  - o When you arrive, please maintain six feet of distance from one another in the parking lot.
  - o No handshakes, hugs, fist bumps, elbow bumps, or other "contact greetings" of any kind.
  - o The offering will be collected in stationary and clearly marked Alden and Harvard offering boxes.
  - o Please maintain only one household per "seating area."

- The service will be shortened to a 30-40 minute timeframe.
  - o There will be music and because we are outdoors, you may sing. But, either sing with your mask on or sing as quietly as possible to limit the spread of respiratory droplets.
  - o If you have “joys or concerns” to be shared, Pastor Eric’s cell phone number will be on the bulletin. 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.
- Hand sanitizer will be available if needed.
- Communion will take place on July 5<sup>th</sup> using the same prepackaged elements we used in June. You will be able to pick up the elements on your way to your “seating area.”
- No nursery will be available.
- There will be no after church fellowship time or refreshments.
- 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 An usher will be by the door to the church to let you in as the building is still technically closed.
  - 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 by standing at the markings on the floor.

**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 in the parking lot until you are “seated” and especially during singing.
- No contact greetings of any kind
- Observe social distancing from the parking lot until you find your “seating area.”

**Weather related cancelations:**

- Our in-person worship will be cancelled if there is a strong possibility of rain/thunderstorms.
- Our in-person worship will be cancelled if there will be a heat index above 90 degrees during worship.
- This decision will be made by 8am on Sunday mornings and emails will be sent via email and on the website.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to discuss them with members of our Leadership Teams or Pastor Eric. We thank you for helping us make returning to worship as comfortable and safe as possible for everyone.

The First UMC and Alden UMC Leadership Teams