

## Church Council letter to Congregation

March, 2021

### Community Guidelines

As the vaccine rolls out and the weather begins to get warmer, we on Church Council would like to name some things to keep in mind as we make decisions about meeting in-person for any church event.

**WPMF will continue holding online worship services and Sunday school** so that all can participate, regardless of their level of vulnerability. Once we are able to safely meet for in-person indoor worship we will likely work on ways for online participation or viewing.

Council does not recommend in person indoor meetings. However, **outdoor gatherings** with protocols could be possible for Small Groups, Youth Group events, Mentoring, Book or Bible Studies, committee meetings, etc. We strongly encourage groups to keep in mind the spectrum of needs in the group and follow CDC and city health guidelines.

Here are some points to consider as a faith community practicing safety and inclusion while caring for one another's spiritual and mental health:

- **As people of faith, we are particularly called to think of the community impact of our actions.** Jesus calls us to love our neighbor and enemy. During a pandemic, this means we are called to think beyond our own or families' health, and do our part to help stop the community spread in our neighborhoods, region, and the nation. Particularly for those communities that have been hit the hardest.
- **We have differing levels of individual or community vulnerability.** One of our primary values at WPMF is to be a place where all are welcomed. So, we need to acknowledge and respect that some of us have more vulnerabilities than others in this pandemic and make sure that we continue ways of connecting that meet those needs.
- **We need to balance our mental health, physical health, and spiritual health during a pandemic. But we will do that differently.** Some of us may be willing to take on more physical risks in order to feel mentally and spiritually well. While others may be choosing to take on as little risk as possible to maintain their physical health. There are creative ways to hold physical, mental, and spiritual health during this time. But we recognize that it is hard work, particularly if we have different opinions about what is needed.

In an effort to recognize the spectrum of differences and also keep before us our commitment to inclusion and safety, Church Council encourages the following considerations for any church

outdoor group gathering (i.e. Small Groups, Youth Group events, Mentoring, Book or Bible Studies, committee meetings, etc):

- Groups choose options where those in a group who are at higher risk can still participate.
- Everyone in the group has a voice of whether to meet virtually or in-person outside.
- If the group decides to meet in person outside, ensure that the members of the group agree to the practices you will use when together. Talk them through ahead of time so as not to put someone on the spot when you meet in person.

If the group decides to meet in person follow CDC and city health guidelines including:

1. Always hold gatherings outside and wear masks.
2. Keep groups small since the more people one interacts with and for a longer period of time increase the risk of becoming infected or spreading the virus.
3. Stay 6 ft or more apart whenever possible.
4. Continue practices of washing or sanitizing your hands often. Particularly before touching your face or a shared item.
5. If you are feeling symptoms of any respiratory cold-like illness, stay home as it is difficult to wear a mask and manage a runny nose, sneezing or coughing and to keep your hands clean.

Please contact a Church Council member or Amanda ([amanda@wpmf.org](mailto:amanda@wpmf.org)) with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,  
Church Council (Elders, Deacons, HRC, Pastor)