

March 16, 2021

Friends,

It has been one year. March 15, 2020 was OUMC's first livestream service and the last worship at which we had a congregation in the building. The months since have seen our church and our world change rapidly to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic. Our priority has remained loving our neighbors by keeping each other safe.

The end is in sight. La Crosse County's risk level for COVID-19 has been at "medium" since the beginning of February. Pastor Park and some of our members have already received the vaccine. All adults in Wisconsin will be able to register for the vaccine starting May 1. If Americans follow safety measures like masking, and enough people get vaccinated, national leaders predict a return to relative normalcy this summer.

We have a schedule for re-opening! Based on this information, our COVID team plans a return to limited in-person worship starting **April 18**. We are also planning a limited in-person Maundy Thursday service April 1.

What does *limited* in-person worship mean?

1. Pre-register to attend by contacting the office or signing up online for each service. Seating is limited so that we can maintain safe distancing. *Sorry, no Sunday morning walk-ins.*
2. Use only the 4th Avenue and covered drop-off entrances.
3. Wear a mask while at church and maintain the recommended 6-foot safe distance from non-family members. We encourage the use of hand sanitizer, which will be provided.
4. Touch-free worship means handouts and individual communion cups will be pre-placed in the pews. Hymnals and bibles have been removed from the sanctuary; bring your own bible or use your smartphone. We encourage you to give online, or drop your offering in the baskets by the door.
5. No singing; just enjoy the music. Group singing aerosolizes viruses and is not yet recommended.
6. Ushers will dismiss you by rows after worship so we can clean the church. Feel free to visit outside.
7. No Sunday School or coffee hour. You may bring your own coffee or beverages in covered containers.
8. No nursery service. Families are welcome to bring their own quiet toys and use the family area on the left side of the sanctuary or in the narthex. We love having kids in worship!

As conditions normalize later in the year, we will gradually return to a more familiar worship format.

We will continue to livestream all worship services (<http://youtube.onalaskaumc.org/>). Only you know your comfort and safety level being part of a large group in public. Please exercise good judgement to keep yourself and others safe. Whether you are in the sanctuary or online, you are part of our same church family.

Keep up with the news. We post regular updates on our website, Facebook page, and in the weekly email newsletter. You can sign up for the eNews on our website – look for the option in the sidebar. Or call the office (608-783-3380) and ask Sue to send our weekly updates to you via postal mail.

"Then we will see face-to-face, though now we see in a mirror, dimly" (1 Corinthians 13:12*). The day is coming soon when we can once again see each other face-to-face. Our perseverance is being rewarded, friends! **"And now faith, hope, and love abide; and the greatest of these is love"** (13:13). Keep loving and hoping. Amen.

See you soon!



Wes Panzer,
Council Chair



Megan Barbian, RN,
Lay Leader



Becky Barnes,
Stephen Leader



Mark Beahm, MD,
COVID-19 Team



Rev. M. Park Hunter
Pastor

COVID-19 Response Team: Megan Barbian, Becky Barnes, Mark Beahm, Paul Bratsch, Jessica Gobel, Park Hunter, Sandy Koster, Jeff Moorhouse