

Pastors Ponderings ...May 13, 2020

## What's Happening?

What were you thinking last week when the morning brought us snow flurries here in Dickinson County? Could you believe it? Well, probably. We live in the UP and the snow is never done, really, until we get to July, as some people tell me. It's hard to watch snow in May, but we know: the flowers will survive. The grass will be greener still. The spring birds will make it through. Probably by afternoon, the sun will shine again. Blue skies are out there somewhere.

It's good to laugh and shake our heads over the things we cannot control. Like the weather. Like COVID-19.

Thursday, May 7, I got word from the Bishop's office that we United Methodist Churches in Michigan are being asked to hold off on in-building worship services until at least May 28. That is a disappointment for so many of us who keep looking forward to gathering and then being told...'Not Yet.'

Of course, we will continue Facebook-Live worship. Some people are talking about an all- church ZOOM coffee hour? Some churches are doing that, and people just love seeing each other's faces again. The Community Meal continues. There is a team of people who keep making phone calls. God is still present to each of us, every day and everywhere.

The Bishop's office has sent out a booklet with guidance, principles, and direction for us. If you are interested, send your e-mail address and we will send you a copy to look at. Do let me know if you have any comments, thoughts, ideas. We are all in this together, and everyone's voice is important, as the committees of the church make decisions for all of us.

For now, I just want to highlight a few principles that are guiding our denominational strategy:

\*The Governor sets the minimum standards for safety and for the safety of all...we UM people seek to abide by those guidelines.

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\*UM churches and District/Conference offices may choose higher standards for themselves based on the risk factors (age and vulnerability) of the congregation and the local conditions.

\*County Health Departments should be consulted for more in-depth information before making specific church decisions.

I take comfort in this comprehensive, thought- out framework. How about you? The Trinity committees are thinking about all of this, and I look forward to vigorous discussions with them about 'Next Steps.'

Again, your thoughts and ideas are welcome, as well. Please feel free to contact me by e-mail ([pastorimtrinity@gmail.com](mailto:pastorimtrinity@gmail.com)) or in the office, (906)774-2545. I would enjoy talking with you!

I also take comfort in reporting that there was no accumulation of snow. The parking lot, in fact, is clear of all those mountains that accumulated over the winter. The grass is greening up nicely, and the lilac bushes are starting to bud out. God is everywhere and all is well...for this moment and all eternity. God's peace to you all. In the name of Jesus.

Pastor Geri