



Grand Avenue United Methodist Church

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November 20, 2020

Dear Friends –

In this season of thanks and giving, I am grateful for the love that you share for Christ, for his church, and for the mission and ministry of Grand Avenue UMC. I am praying specifically for you and for your loved ones as we prepare for our celebrations on Thanksgiving Day.

Most of you are planning an observance that is remarkably different from Thanksgiving 2019; many of you have changed your plans again (or even cancelled them altogether) since the beginning of the week.

However you spend the day, my hope is that you will know the presence of a providential God, that you will celebrate with praise, and that you will prayerfully consider ways you may show gratitude to God by sharing with someone less fortunate than yourself. To that end I am particularly grateful to the people whose gifts and service are making possible our continued tradition of serving a Thanksgiving meal each year as well as “Table of Grace” each week. Our meals will continue to be provided only on a take-out basis until the current health crisis is over.

In the meantime, in much the same way that your family is altering their plans, our church family is preparing for modification. With a rising number of active COVID cases in Garland County and with new counsel being received from Governor Hutchinson and Bishop Mueller, our “Re-Launch Team” has reconvened to evaluate our experience since returning to in-person worship and to plan how we will respond to a positive case traced to our ministries. We also considered the possibility of a temporary suspension of gatherings if the threat of harm seems too high.

Please read carefully the latest update to our policies and procedures printed below. Please pray for the leaders who are helping us to offer our best even in the worst circumstances. And please let us know if you have questions or concerns that need to be considered as we move forward with faith, hope, and love.

Finally, plan now to join us for worship in-person or online this Sunday. Our worship will be centered on Philippians 4:4-8, with an emphasis on “Being Thankful in Difficult Times.”

With love and gratitude,

David M. Fleming, pastor

Building Faith • Bringing Hope • Reaching Out in Love

When a COVID positive case is traced to the Grand Avenue Church building:

- **We will be contacted by the Arkansas Department of Health contact tracers.**
- **We will supply to AR Dept. of Health the list of people who were in our building around the time of the infected individual. This is why we need a complete list of people attending ANY functions in our building including both members and guests.**
- **Contact tracing calls will be made by the AR Dept. of Health to the list described above to request them to quarantine.**
- **Your church will also temporarily end in-person worship on Sunday mornings for TWO SUNDAYS following the notification. You will be notified by social media, email, letter in the US Mail, or phone call. We will prioritize notification to the congregation members who have been attending functions regularly within our church building. We will do this as quickly as possible since ADH contact tracing calls can be lagging the positive test by several days.**

The Re-Launch Team is continually monitoring the virus activity within our specific county and community. There could be reasons to pause in-building worship other than a confirmed positive case. We will be flexible to those specific situations and will keep you informed as described above.

The on-line worship opportunities continue on both YouTube and Facebook for any of us who choose to remain at home. We are the church regardless of our physical location!