

May 18, 2020

Dear Eastminster Congregation,

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place” (Acts 2:1). So begins the account of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church in the book of Acts. As we approach the day of Pentecost in the year 2020, we understand that it may not be possible for the members of Eastminster to be “all together in one place” this year. While some restrictions are being lifted in some places and for some people, the ongoing threat of the Covid-19 global pandemic will require that we return to church in a way that is measured and mindful of the needs of the most vulnerable among us. While some may begin soon to attend public worship in person, we know that some will need to continue to worship at home for some time.

We give thanks, then, for the promise of our faith—that the Lord God will bless and keep us, the risen Christ is with us, and the Holy Spirit connects us with believers near and far. We take comfort and inspiration from the example of the earliest believers, who “spent much time together in the temple” *and* “broke bread at home...with glad and generous hearts” (Acts 2:46). As we anxiously track the news in these times—with numbers of new cases, numbers of persons who have died, and numbers of those who are recovering—we remember the good news of the gospel: “And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).

Currently, Eastminster is closed to worship and activities through May 31, 2020. As Eastminster begins to resume public activities after that time, please know that we will do so through a careful process of discussion and discernment, with an abundance of caution and concern for those who are most vulnerable, upon consideration of the best scientific knowledge at our disposal, in the spirit of constant prayer, and with full trust in the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. *To that end, the Eastminster Session members have appointed a task force charged with developing guidelines for a phased re-opening of the church facilities to worship and ministries. The task force report is due at the regular meeting of Session on May 27. Upon approval, the guidelines will be made available to the congregation and implemented immediately.*

We may make mistakes along the way. There will be awkward moments as we adjust to new protocols and practices. There will be times of frustration, disappointment, and grief. We will have countless opportunities to exercise the spiritual gifts of patience, kindness, and self-control.

But there will also be blessings. There will be wonderful surprises, great celebrations, and moments of deep satisfaction. We will get to see glimpses of the new thing God is doing, even now. We will have opportunities to savor the spiritual gifts of love, joy, peace, generosity, and faithfulness.

Let us be faithful, then—to God and to one another—as we receive the gifts and work through the challenges of this time in the life of our congregation and world. Let us be guided by the Word, responsive to the Spirit, and open to the grace of God. Let us remember that nothing can separate us from God’s love in Christ Jesus.

In the service of Christ,

*Members of Eastminster Session*