

In gladness, like our ancestor, King David, we proclaim:
“I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go to the house of the LORD!” (Psalm 122:1)

And so, we did! On Sunday, May 2nd, we returned to the house of the Lord for *in-sanctuary* worship. On May 23rd, this Sunday, which is **Pentecost**, we will celebrate our “homecoming” with the **Sacrament of Holy Communion** and the **Reception of New Members**. We will celebrate our return to worship - inside - the house of the LORD. We will also celebrate you, your faithfulness to the church of Jesus Christ, and the many ways you share your gifts through the plethora of ministries at Starview.

Sisters and Brothers, we have so much for which we can be **thankful!** The Holy Spirit is indeed alive and blowing in and through us.

On Thursday, May 13th, the **Mask Mandate** was lifted for *fully vaccinated* persons in the State of Pennsylvania. This directive follows that of the CDC, which rescinded masking and social distancing requirements for *fully vaccinated* people.

Beginning this Sunday, May 23, Starview United Church of Christ will no longer require masks to be worn indoors during worship for people who are *fully vaccinated*. People who are not yet fully vaccinated or are immunocompromised should still wear mask indoors, in keeping with guidance from the CDC.

Additionally, anyone who is **not comfortable** being unmasked indoors should feel free to continue to wear a mask.

Children, kindergarten age and older, who are not yet fully vaccinated will continue to mask while meeting indoors.

Exuberant **singing** is encouraged, but while *wearing a mask*. COVID is an airborne virus, and since both vaccinated and unvaccinated people are able to transmit it, masking while singing reduces everyone’s risk of transmitting or contracting the virus.

Pre-registration is not necessary. A greeter will take your information when you arrive. Should we discern that in Sunday morning worship, you were potentially exposed, we will use the collected information to contact you and the PA Health Department.

Virtual worship via Facebook Live is always an option. A Facebook account is not needed in order to participate in this way. A family member or friend who *does* have a FB account can simply email or text you the service link and you can then, click on the link and participate in worship too – as it is happening – live with everyone else! As has been done in the past, for later viewing, the service will be made available on church website on Sunday afternoon.

Virtual worship is a wonderful way to still be in community and worship, should you be home quarantining, feeling ill, on vacation, or need to be physically away for any reason.

Offering plates will continue to be located at each entrance/exit for your safety. E-tithing forms are also available for your convenience.

Both entrances/exits to the sanctuary will remain open with hand sanitizing stations located at each, for your convenience.

The **Christian life** is meant to be one marked with self-sacrifice and love, integrity and honesty, yet because we all sin and find it easy to do so, these are things we must work hard at. Knowing this, we turn to the words of scripture for encouragement and guidance.

Jesus calls us to **love one another**. He said, “As I have loved you, you must love one another.” (John 13:34) and “Do unto others as you would have them do to you.” (Luke 6:31) The Apostle Paul pointed out that “we should take pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord, but also in the eyes of man” (2 Corinthians 8:21) and we should “not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices.” (Colossians 3:9).

As a community of faith-full followers of Jesus, we trust one another. We trust in the Christ-like, sacrificial love we have for one another, and are called to be truthful in our actions as well as our words; we trust one another to do what is right and safe for everyone – that we might continue worshipping safely in the house of the Lord, together.

May it be so...

It is exciting to take these steps with you in safely returning to life as “normal” and hope to see you in-person, inside the house of the Lord, for worship this Sunday.

Pastor Laura