



The Circuit Rider

He Is Risen...

MATTHEW 28:7



april

2021

Salmon Creek Church

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a note from Pastor John



It's not all that original to be writing an article about the renewal of life for an April newsletter. But it isn't all that bad either, because it's a story we never get tired of. As life springs up out of the ground, we are also witnesses to Christ springing up out of the tomb. Our spirits are raised doubly in the natural world and the spiritual world – and really, who is to say that the two are not inextricably intertwined?

So, we can say with confidence that God is pro-life. I don't mean this in the narrow, politically charged way in which the term is sometimes used. I mean that God created life, breathed His spirit into the dust and moved his hands over the water. And God has made all life fertile and fecund so that there will be even more life! But God didn't stop there. In Christ's resurrection God has given us an assurance that death does not defeat life. Whatever role the death of the body plays in God's vast plan is sometimes hard for us to grasp, yet Christ's bodily return is simplicity itself. He just comes back. And in the Gospel of John, he comes back as the gardener – the caretaker of life.

When I say it is simplicity itself, it is the simplicity of our deepest truths. It is the simplicity of the ground beneath our feet or the air we breathe, so easy to take for granted and so completely necessary for a rich, beautiful, meaningful life.

And at precisely this moment, I have received a text telling me that one of our congregation members is bringing a new life into the world. So simple! So profound! A life-changing event that goes far, far beyond the simple biology of life. For this child will be a unique and beloved child of God: As are you; As am I. Through our willfulness we might reject God and lead a life of spiritual poverty. Or we might embrace His precepts, His guidance and His grace that we might grow into the men and women of God, living a life of spiritual abundance. Of true life.

Happy Easter!

Blessings,
Pastor John



Returning to the Sanctuary

As Covid recedes, case rates fall and more and more are vaccinated, we are now able to make some plans to return to worship in the Sanctuary. As of now, we are looking at Sunday, May 9th, as the date we return to sanctuary worship services. Since we still anticipate a reduced capacity in the sanctuary, we may have two, identical services. Also, our services will continue to be broadcast on YouTube for those of you who are not able to attend for any reason.

I do not know when mask mandates will disappear – soon, I hope! – but Salmon Creek Church will never require proof of vaccination for admittance to the worship of God. Our congregation has done beautifully using common sense, and I trust that we will all continue to do so.

I am so grateful that we have had the FMC to use as a “lifeboat” – a big, airy, well ventilated space where we could gather yet still maintain good social distancing. But, like all of you, I am looking forward to returning to our beautiful sanctuary.





The following article comes from UMC.org in regards to the reopening process for UMC churches.

After weeks of worshipping online, some United Methodist congregations are beginning to resume in-person services.

We are excited to *go* to church again, but it would be unrealistic to expect things to be as they were before the global pandemic.

“Worship will be different and feel strange,” one United Methodist church shares with their '[Guidelines for Reopening](#).' That’s good for each of us to keep in mind as we prepare to go back to church.

Please note: Those considered at [high risk of contracting coronavirus](#) are recommended to refrain from in-person worship gatherings at this time.

Outdoor worship

Weather permitting, some congregations will worship outdoors, inviting us to stay in our vehicles and listen to the service on our car radio—similar to the old drive-in movie theaters. *We can experiment with honking our horns instead of shouting ‘Amen!’ or applauding.*

Others may ask us to bring a camping chair or blanket to church for worship on the lawn at a safe social distance. It can be an adventure!

Entering the building

If our congregation chooses to worship indoors, we may not be able to enter as we did previously. Certain doors may be designated as entrances and others as exits. Church leadership may also limit how long before the service we can enter the building.

Policies like these are especially helpful for congregations with multiple services. They allow us to maintain proper social distancing between those leaving the earlier service and those entering for a later service.

Health screenings may be performed at building entrances. Using a no-contact thermometer, a greeter may take our temperature on the way in, as a means of keeping us well during and after worship.

Masks will likely be required when entering the building and strongly encouraged for worship on the lawn. We may also notice hand sanitizer stations at entrances to the building, sanctuary or worship area.

Worship

To help maintain safe social distancing, seating will likely be modified. Pews may be roped off. Chairs might be rearranged. In some churches, an usher may escort our family to specific seats. *We may not be able to sit in our regular spot—unthinkable!*

Following plans like these help the congregation use the worship space most effectively until social distancing and occupancy restrictions are lifted.

It will be good to see our fellow worshipers in person again, but we'll need to refrain from greeting them with hugs or handshakes for now. A nod of the head or a simple gesture like praying hands works *almost* as well, both before the service and during the passing of the peace.

We may not receive a printed bulletin and the hymnals, Bibles, attendance pads and the other high-touch items we're used to seeing near our seats, may be removed.

Speaking of high-touch items, we probably won't pass a [collection plate](#) for the offering. Instead, we'll be invited to drop our offerings in a designated location on our way into or out of worship.

We can also continue to give online or via automatic withdrawal. Your congregation needs your continued financial support. *Do you have concerns about digital offerings? Read '[Understanding the safety of online giving... without getting too geeky](#)' for more helpful information.*

Also, and this is a hard one for us United Methodists, [congregational singing](#) will likely be discouraged. So may responsive readings, congregational prayers and other worship elements that encourage us to join our voices. Maybe we'll get to hum along to a hymn or praise song as we read the lyrics, which sometimes offers a new appreciation for words we've sung many times before.

[Communion](#) is another important part of our worship that congregations may suspend during this time. Others will choose to modify the practice. A common chalice, for example, will likely not be used. When the sacrament is offered, it's okay not to participate if we're uncomfortable.

Other possible changes:

A less-sacred favorite of many United Methodists, the fellowship time before and after worship, will also likely be on hold. Not only is it difficult to [serve food](#) and beverages safely, our church doesn't want to encourage us to gather too closely together during this time. *Maybe we can each bring our own coffee and chat in the parking lot while maintaining a safe social distance.*

Unfortunately, Sunday school classes, the nursery, childcare and other Sunday morning children and youth ministries may not be available. The rooms used for these activities are often not big enough to be able to maintain social distancing. *It can also be difficult to convince a toddler she shouldn't hug her friends.*

Not ready? Worship online

If any of us don't feel ready to return quite yet, that's okay. We can continue to support our church by [worshiping online](#) until we're more comfortable.

As we return, whether now or later, let us do it well. Stay healthy, and in the words of [John Wesley](#), let's continue "to watch over one another in love," whether together or from a safe social distance.

**[Joe Iovino](#) is Director, Member Content for [United Methodist Communications](#). Contact him by [email](#).*

Because decisions and processes for resuming in-person worship are made by each United Methodist congregation in consultation with their [district](#) and [annual conference](#), every church will approach things differently.

Maybe none of us will encounter all of these changes. Some may see something not mentioned here. Still, it is wise to consider what *may* be different.

Thanks to some generous grants, the Winter Housing Overflow (WHO) program has been able to substantially expand its services in support of homeless men and families during the past year. Previously, its services were limited to providing overnight shelter to homeless men and families during the cold weather season (from November 1st to March 31st). The good news is that WHO now operates year-round at its St. Andrews Church (downtown Vancouver) location! In addition to providing overnight shelter, the church is now open all day on Saturdays and Sundays for WHO program activities. WHO would like to continue to operate year-round but needs continuing support from its donors.

The members of Salmon Creek United Methodist Church have been active supporters of WHO for as long as I can remember. So, how can you be of assistance?

Donate directly at www.whoprogram.org

Volunteer in-person (after COVID restrictions are lifted)

Donate any of the following items (drop off at SCUMC in April):

Standard size pillows with plastic covers

Travel-size shampoos and conditioners

Disposable razors

New toothbrushes

New combs

Feminine hygiene products

Baby or Adult diapers

Ear plugs

Large, clear, 10-ml lawn-size garbage bags

Nitrile gloves

Clothing: hats, underwear, gloves, socks



Remember “the smallest acts of kindness can make the biggest impact.” Thank you for your support of WHO.

- Greg Berry

More to follow in May.



SAVE THE DATE:
Serving Promise Raising Hope
Virtual Event and Auction
May 21st, 2021 from 6:30 - 8:00 PM

Like many events happening these days, our annual event will look a little different this year. Join us online Friday May 21st at 6:30 pm for our Annual Fundraiser Event and *AUCTION!* This inspirational event will support Family Promise of Clark County and our efforts to support families with children who are experiencing homelessness in Clark County.

While this event has moved to an online event, it still will be an impactful and exciting evening together! New to this year's event we will have an online auction that will begin Monday May 17th and end at the conclusion of our online event on Friday May 21st.

We will be selling regular priced tickets for \$15 each or you can upgrade to a VIP ticket for \$50 and receive: a bottle of wine or sparkling cider, decadent chocolates and two raffle tickets for your chance to win one of our amazing raffle items!

Registration information will be sent out soon, so mark your calendars for Friday May 21st and for participating in the online auction beginning Monday May 17th through Friday May 21st!

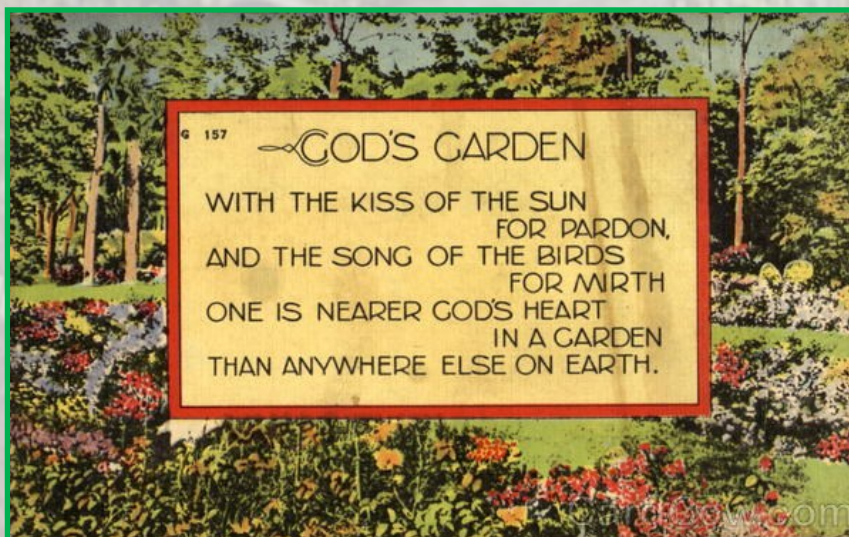
If you have any questions, or if you are interested in donating auction items or raffle prizes, please contact Melissa Edwards at: events@familypromiseofclarkco.org or at: (360)909-7322.

Sincerely,

David Cole
Executive Director
Family Promise of Clark County
dcole@familypromiseofclarkco.org

Growing in God's Garden

We have plenty of room in our church gardens for more gardeners this year! Each 4' by 8' plot costs only \$10 for the entire year to help cover water expenses and some repairs. If you have never gardened, this would be a good time to try gardening, as we have several gardeners with several decades of experience who have been using the church gardens. We hook up the water in mid-April, but you can do soil preparation before then if you want to. Currently, each plot is bedded down with few, if any weeds. We have all the garden tools you can imagine! If interested, contact Jim Selby at 828-508-5094 or westerlunds2006@outlook.com





...at Salmon Creek Church!



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**HE IS
RISEN
INDEED**



Thank you for reading the Circuit Rider! If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

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Submissions for the Circuit Rider can be sent to circuitrider@salmoncreek.church. Articles and announcements are due by midnight on the third Sunday of each month.

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