



WOODBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Rev. John A. Thomason, Pastor

The Life of the Church

by Pastor John

June 30, 2020

Dear Church Family,

“It’s so great to see you!” For nearly four months, we’ve dreamed of saying these words to members of our church family; and now, that dream is about to come true.

I hope you digested the two articles penned by Lay Leader *Mark Davis* for last week’s **Messenger**. The first article previewed WUMC’s plans to resume gathered worship in mid-July, while carefully following the guidelines established by the New York Annual Conference to ensure worshipers’ health and safety. Each congregation was given some latitude about when and where to reopen. The survey you completed indicated your preference for meeting outdoors during the summer months. The Town of Woodbury has agreed to allow us to gather on the North Green across the street from the sanctuary, where a reasonable number of people can be accommodated while practicing social distancing. Our COVID-19 Recovery Team has submitted to the Connecticut District a detailed proposal for our resumption of corporate worship. The exact date of our first in-person service will depend on how quickly that plan is approved and how soon our own preparations can be implemented.

Mark’s second article was a big “thank you” to all those who have helped to sustain our church’s ministry during this season of separation and prepare us for our time of reunion. Modest person that he is, Mark didn’t call attention to his own contributions, so the one individual who didn’t get thanked in the article was Mark himself. I want to rectify that omission right now!

When Mark was asked to be our Lay Leader for 2020, we had no idea how providential that choice would be. In addition to being a committed church member and a caring human being, Mark has unsurpassed organizational skills and an ability to lead groups with clarity and calmness. His gifts have been invaluable as our church has navigated the pandemic shutdown and developed plans to reopen gradually. The entire COVID-19 Recovery Team and the Board of Trustees helped to shape our proposal to the District, but it was Mark who led the process and crafted the final written document. Mark’s work was a model of clear thinking and attention to detail, undergirded by a spirit of love and caring for our congregation.

Some of you may not know that Mark retired recently from his position as an engineer at Sikorsky Aircraft. He accepted the role of our church’s Lay Leader in part because he now has time as a retiree to devote to this ministry. Little did he know what challenges would lie ahead, and how useful his professional background and experience would be to another organization – namely, ours! One of Mark’s tasks at Sikorsky was to write detailed proposals for contracts with potential clients. So when he produced the proposal for reopening WUMC, he was completely in his element, and the end result was not only thorough but brilliant. Again, I say that the timing of Mark’s tenure as Lay Leader is not accidental, but providential. Many thanks, Mark; and thanks be to God!

Grace and peace,
John

Open Hearts . Open Minds . Open Doors