



## WOODBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Rev. John A. Thomason, Pastor

### **The Life of the Church by Pastor John June 9, 2020**

Dear Church Family,

In the midst of recent disruptions to our daily lives and convulsions in our wider society, it is more important than ever that we remain grounded in the core commitments and values of our faith – and that means to worship the God we love and serve. Here are some upcoming events/updates regarding our worship life as a congregation.

#### **NYAC-LED WORSHIP SERVICE ON SUNDAY, JUNE 14**

June 11-14 were the dates originally set aside for the New York Annual Conference in Hempstead, NY. Of course, that meeting was postponed due to the pandemic; however, Bishop Thomas Bickerton has granted pastors in the Conference those four days for rest and renewal. NYAC will provide an online worship service for all churches in the Conference on Sunday, June 14. You will be able to access both the video and audio-only broadcasts in exactly the same way that you have been doing so. So just to be clear, there will be no service originating from our sanctuary on the 14<sup>th</sup>. This means that the musicians and technicians who are also responsible for providing our congregation with weekly worship will have a much-deserved break as well. We wish them a “good Sabbath” and offer them our ongoing gratitude for their tireless efforts.

#### **REOPENING PLANS ARE EVOLVING**

As grateful as we are for the opportunity to worship online, all of us are looking forward to the day when we can gather again in our sanctuary. Because we are a connectional church, our own reopening is contingent on following guidelines provided by the New York Annual Conference. The Church Council appointed a COVID-19 Recovery Team to help us through that detailed process. The team has met several times and also involved the Trustees in their discussions. Because of the complexity of this undertaking, mid-July is the current target time for reopening the church for corporate worship; but that time is still tentative. The Recovery Team and Trustees will need much volunteer assistance in preparing the building for re-occupancy.

#### **SURVEY OF CONGREGATIONAL READINESS**

When we do reopen the sanctuary, you may rest assured that all guidelines will have been followed to ensure the health and safety of worshippers. The question is: Will you come? Our membership includes a wide span of older persons and young families who continue to take every possible precaution during the pandemic. We respect everyone’s sense of what is safe and unsafe as we weather this crisis together. An online and audio version of our weekly worship service will still be produced and made available for those who choose to remain at home for the foreseeable future. In order to help us gauge your willingness to return to public worship, the Recovery Team and Trustees have developed a congregational survey that will be circulated this week. It can be completed easily online or through a printed version. Please let us know how you are feeling about participating in gathered worship.

Grace and peace,  
*John*

**Open Hearts . Open Minds . Open Doors**