



## WOODBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Rev. John A. Thomason, Pastor

# The Life of the Church

by Pastor John

May 26, 2020

Dear Church Family,

I have exciting news on two fronts. The first is a special celebration of Pentecost. The second is that we have begun making plans that will ultimately allow us to re-open the church in the second half of June. See below for more details.

### **YOU'RE INVITED TO A PENTECOST BIRTHDAY PARTY!**

As we continue to weather the pandemic, a number of milestones and celebrations are being observed, but in ways that are different and less desirable than those to which we are accustomed. All of us empathize with the disappointment of 2020 graduates who are seeing their commencement exercises completely reshaped in order to preserve social distancing. "Virtual" and "drive-by" are the operative methods for celebrating graduations and birthdays these days.

On Sunday, May 31, the Church of Jesus Christ will celebrate its birthday on the occasion we call **Pentecost**. On that Jewish festival day two thousand years ago, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles of Jesus gathered in Jerusalem, forging them into a distinct community and empowering them to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Not to be deterred by the pandemic, WUMC is planning a "birthday party" on Pentecost Sunday. We will celebrate the only way we can at the moment – remotely! **You are invited to make a cellphone video from your home, offering a simple greeting, a joy, and/or a concern. Please limit your video to one minute or less. Then email your video to Theron Kissinger at [polger33@gmail.com](mailto:polger33@gmail.com). The deadline for submissions is this Thursday, May 28. Please contact Theron by email or text (203-910-5082) if you have questions or need assistance either making or sending your video.**

### **CONVERSATIONS BEGIN ABOUT REOPENING THE CHURCH**

We are all looking forward to the time when we can again worship God and celebrate our life as a community of faith in our church building, not just on a computer. That time is finally on the horizon. Our resident Bishop, *Thomas J. Bickerton*, has announced that **churches in the New York Annual Conference may open on June 15 provided they meet protocol requirements established by the Conference**. The requirements are extensive and will entail careful thought and hard work on our part. We must ensure (and certify to our District Superintendent) that our building is properly prepared and that our worship services are conducted in such a way as to protect the health of worshipers.

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

The Church Council has created a **COVID-19 Recovery Team** to guide us through the reopening process. The members are *Mark Davis* (Lay Leader), chair; *Bud Behlman* (Trustee); *Catherine Mason* (Children and Youth Ministry); *Chris Shay* (Worship); and myself. This group is charged to help us meet all the requirements for reopening, which in turn will help us determine a target date for our first Sunday to return to the sanctuary for worship. Please offer the Recovery Team your prayerful support and cooperation in the weeks and months ahead. Please let us know if you would like participate in either initial or recurring efforts to clean and/or modify the church to minimize risks of virus transmission.

Grace and peace,

*John*