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Good Shepherd Community of Faith

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**August 12, 2020 –** **Congregation Update**

Hello, my Good Shepherd family

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it! I hope you have experienced Christ around you today. Have you blessed someone with a smile, or phone call today? If not, it is not too late.

It is important that we keep you updated on decisions made concerning our beginning to regather as a church. Since our last update in in July, the Ministry Team, and myself, have been communicating with each other as we have closely monitored the effects of COVID-19 and its affects in the United States and other countries. Like you, we continue to pray that the spread of the virus will slow and those that contract it will not experience severe sickness or death.

As I stated last month, we must continue to be vigilant about loving our neighbors by wearing face coverings, washing our hands frequently, and keeping a safe distance from each other. In New York State our numbers have continued to level down due to our love for our families and others in the community by covering our faces. Thank God for that.

 We continue our Sunday gatherings virtually via Zoom and Facebook live and Audio. Our Ministry team, Wellness and Bible study have had the best participation in years with ZOOM meetings; our church family members are providing fantastic ministry by staying in touch with our church members that are staying home at this time. More people are worshipping with us now that we are sharing our services online than before we gathered in the sanctuary. Thank you for your consistent generosity in your financial commitment to the ongoing mission and ministry of our church. God is faithful, alive, and active in our congregation. We praise God for all these things!

We are aware that a few area churches have begun to regather for worship services. The number of people attending these services is small. People are hesitant about gathering in groups, whether indoors or outdoors, even when wearing face coverings and physically distanced appropriately. This is understandable because the risk can be great. When asked about us beginning to regather for worship, many of you have expressed, “What we are doing now is good.” And there are some in our church who are ready to return to gathering for worship. We hear you, also. We would all like to resume gathering to worship in our sanctuary. So, here is the plan we have put in place:

Church Picnic at **Fireman’s Field in East Aurora** on **Sunday August 30th at 11am**. There is enough space outside to physical distance. We are asking if you would bring your own lunch. The church will provide beverages and dessert. Please come out and join us.

We will continue virtual meetings and services indefinitely and open the church for those who want to attend in person. The **Ministry team will gather on September 6th, 2020** first to make sure everything is in place and running well.

**Sunday, September 13th** will be our official date to regather in person. The church as been measured off in 6 feet spaces to keep everyone safe with physical distance, we have sanitizer, thermometers, cleaning disinfectant, extra masks available to keep you safe.

Note: *it is recommended that you do not bring many items with you into church buildings*. We will have Bibles on the back table with Ziploc bags with your name on it so you can use the same Bible weekly; it stays in the building on the back table. We will have a table when you enter the church at parking lot entrance where you will have your temperature taken and sign in attesting that you are symptom free. We will not be using the front door at this time.

We recognize that this may bring on anxiety and feeling of fear to some of you. Know we are doing our best to keep you and your family safe. We ask you to please continue praying for our leadership as we continue to provide worship services online, remain connected to each other through ZOOM Bible study meetings, remain faithful in our giving, and be vigilant about remaining safe and providing safety for our neighbors. May God continue to bless all of us until we meet again.

In Christ Service, Pastor Tanya Spencer