

April 16, 2021

Dear Bethlehem Community –

On March 12, 2020, the officers of Bethlehem, with the support of the Bethlehem Council, made the decision to suspend in-person worship activities out of love and care for the most vulnerable in our community. Our love and concern for the most vulnerable continues to drive our decision-making, especially as infection rates are increasing despite a growing vaccination rate in the Rochester area.

The Re-Opening Team has been hard at work since last summer, providing guidance for safe ways to gather and making updates to our facility to accommodate small-group gatherings in compliance with public health guidance.

Last week, the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control on surface cleaning changed, making it feasible to consider resuming in-person gatherings like worship. **We are eager to move forward with plans to come together safely. We are in the process of finalizing plans for beginning a simple, spoken liturgy for in-person worship gathering on Sunday mornings at Bethlehem in May.** We do not have a firm date yet for the first Sunday we will have in-person worship. As soon as we do, we will communicate that to you along with the guidance for how people can participate in these gatherings. **We also intend to continue our Sunday morning livestream in its current form at this time.**

**In order for in-person worship to happen safely and well, we need your partnership and assistance.** Are you able and willing to be part of a team extending hospitality and assisting our Bethlehem community in following the new protocols and guidance that will be required for these gatherings? Sign up on the BLC Website. Have you never done anything like this before? Sign up! We will provide specific guidance and training to you ahead of time so you will know what your role and responsibilities are.

**Stay tuned for the final plans and the date of the first in-person worship gathering at Bethlehem, along with the protocols that will need to be faithfully met in order for us to safely gather.** Please contact any member of the Re-Opening Team\* with any questions or concerns you might have in the meantime.

The people of God at Bethlehem have been amazingly faithful to and supportive of our shared ministry over the last year. We are so excited to begin to move into this new phase of our life together!

In Christ –



Rick Walker  
Council President



The Rev. Amy Walter-Peterson  
Pastor



The Rev. Abigail Zang Hoffman  
Pastor



\*Re-Opening Team members are: Matt Beutel, Brian Edwards, Margie Gaul, Kristina Henry, Julie Owen, Bob Stolze, Rick Walker, Pastor Amy

P.S. If you haven't yet signed up to participate in a listening session, there are still some spots open. We'd love to see you and hear your voice! [Sign-up on our website.](#)