

From the Pastor's Desk

April 7, 2021

Dear Advent Family,

How wonderful it was to be together during Holy Week as we participated in the outdoor worship services! We want to continue to gather for outdoor worship services until we can safely move inside.

For each of the Sundays in April and May, outdoor worship will be held at 10am, weather permitting and will be livestreamed from our website. If weather necessitates the cancellation of the outdoor service, only an online worship service will be available. Additionally, if weather forces cancellation of the outdoor service, a notice will be placed on the Advent website by 8am on Sunday.

There are some things that we can continue to do to ensure our own safety, as well as the safety of our church community.

- First, I encourage you to continue following the CDC guidelines for wearing masks and social distancing.
- Second, I encourage you to receive the vaccine as soon as possible. This not only protects you but it also helps our country reach herd immunity and stops the spread of the virus. I am so thankful that I, along with the entire pastoral staff, have been able to receive the vaccine as have many of our members. We hope to soon be able to say that the entire Advent community is 100% vaccinated!

Here are some important tips for our outdoor services. Please review the items below to ensure that our services are safe.

- Masks are required at all times except during the time we celebrate Holy Communion. Please be sure to return your mask to the proper position as soon as you finish Communion.
- Social distancing is required. Families should spread out from other families. Orange lines for guides may be painted on the grassy area. As difficult as it may be, no hugging, please.
- If the service is cancelled because of weather, a notice will be published on the adventlu.org website by 8am on the day of worship.
- We ask that folks enter through the main entrance on Mark Twain (beside the church). If, however, the grassy area is wet from recent rain, we will hold the service on the asphalt at the entrance to the admin wing. In that case, please enter from the rear of the church on Sandburg Avenue. Just look for the sign at the main entrance directing you to the rear entrance if that's the case.
- Plan to arrive 20-30 minutes prior to service start time. This gives time to park and get situated with your chairs.
- Bring your chairs; however, if you forget or don't have one, we will have some red ones available.
- Those who wish to stay in their car for the service will be able to tune in to FM station 91.1 to hear the service better. Those cars will park facing the grass, or the chairs if we are on the asphalt. When we're on the asphalt, there is room for only 7 vehicles so others will have to be farther back. Please do not park in any of those spaces around the grass unless you're planning to stay in your car.
- Family names will be taken upon entrance. This is for the purpose of contact tracing and it helps us record attendance.
- Dress comfortably for warm weather.
- There will be a table with an offering box for those who wish to bring offerings to the services.
- We will continue to have special musicians and vocalists who will maintain a safe distance from the gathering when they are singing.
- With outdoor services, there are always more challenges to getting the livestream service started. Please be patient. If you watching from home and there are delays, it may be necessary for you to close out your browser and go back into the church website to access the service. Please be sure to try this if you're having problems after 10am.

Our Regathering Task Force continues to monitor the numbers in Mecklenburg County on a regular basis and is meeting every few weeks to discuss the situation. It is our hope that the positivity rate soon falls below 5% and the number of hospitalizations and cases per 100,000 residents continues to decline. These are critical checkpoints for safely returning to indoor worship. While we are all anxious for life to return to "normal", we will take the necessary steps to protect the health and safety of all our church family. At this point we feel outdoor worship affords us much protection and satisfies our strong desire to be together as a community of faith.

Easter blessings from Pastor Ward