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January 10, 2022

Dear Mohawk UMC family and friends,

Out of care and concern for the safety of each member of our congregation, our Administrative Council (Ad. Council) met Sunday afternoon, January 9. The meeting was to discern how we should be approaching worship and other church-related activities in the current conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A year ago, the Ad. Council adopted a plan that corresponded to the Hancock County COVID-19 status that ranged from blue to yellow to orange to red. Hancock County currently is well into the "Red" status. Under that plan, we should be worshipping only virtually, and all other activities would not meet in person, either.

In the Ad. Council's discussion, it was affirmed that where we are today is different in significant ways from where we were a year ago. COVID-19 is still a deadly pandemic, but the majority of us are now fully vaccinated, and many of us are also boosted. COVID-19 is still causing major health issues and even death, but the symptoms of those with immunity are much less severe. COVID-19 is still extremely contagious, but the number of hospitalizations for it is down significantly.

With all of that being considered, the Administrative Council voted to put the plan we adopted a year ago on hold. Instead, we have put in place the following guidelines:

1. You are strongly encouraged to wear a mask while in the church building. Masks are still optional, but they are strongly encouraged for everyone.
2. Social distancing is strongly encouraged, but not mandatory.
3. You are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated/boosted. The vaccine is proven safe and effective.
4. If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19, have any of the symptoms of COVID-19, or if you feel ill in any way, you are strongly encouraged to stay home and worship online as you are able.
5. If you wear a mask to worship but feel uncomfortable worshipping in-person with some who may not be wearing masks, you are strongly encouraged to either worship from home or worship in our Fellowship Hall.

You - and your health and wellbeing - matter to God and to us. We want to keep everyone healthy while giving everyone the opportunity to worship in the most meaningful and safest way possible. Your Ad. Council believes that taking these measures will ensure us to do that under the present circumstances.

Thank you for being part of Mohawk UMC. Thank you for understanding that we are all doing the best we can and making what we believe are the best decisions possible for our congregation. May God be with us all!

In Christian love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Stanley".

Mr. Mike Stanley, Administrative Council Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kerry O'Brien".

Rev. Kerry O'Brien, pastor