

**“If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.”** -Galatians 5:15

As United Methodists we are guided by Three Simple Rules: Do No Harm, Do Good, and Stay in Love with God. First, **we are a people that do no harm**. We practice social distancing and wear protective masks to minimize the harm to others, especially the vulnerable among us (this is not a political statement, we need to protect the elderly, the young, and anyone with a compromised immune system). Second, **we are a people that do all the good that we can**. We care for the spiritual and physical needs of our neighbors, providing food and emotional support where it is needed in our community. Third, **we are a people that stay in love with God** in the way that we live, pray, worship, and grow in our capacity to love our neighbor. Loving God and loving neighbor are inseparable and attainable goals.

Within our community we are called to be first responders in caring for the spiritual, physical, and emotional health of all of God’s people across the Greater Grand Forks area. Living as God’s children we understand, especially during this pandemic, that the church is not a building. There are stories of members who have cared for one another during this time of great need- providing masks, making phone calls, and corresponding via technology. As North Dakotans we know that we’re “North Dakota Strong” and that we’re in this together and my hope is that this continues.

During this time your leadership has created a plan as a framework to help our members make informed decisions. This information is helpful and informative but will still require discernment and prayer for each person to consider. And it is our hope that everyone will operate under the design provided as we move forward.

Wesley United Methodist Church will be open for in-person worship on June 28<sup>th</sup>, which also happens to be John Wesley’s birthday This is a tentative date and depends on our ability to galvanize the volunteers needed to train and open safely during this pandemic. Here is the list of **best practices as we open**:

1. We will be practicing proper social distancing (staying 6 feet apart).
2. We will be contact free (no hugs, handshakes, coffee, snacks, or printed materials will be provided before, during, or after).
3. We will wear a mask (if you do not have one, one will be provided for you at the door and it’s yours to keep).
4. We will sanitize (hand sanitizer will be available at each entrance and common area)
5. We encourage you to stay at home and watch online if you’re a high-risk individual (those with compromised or weak immune systems).
6. We will clean and disinfect (wipe down door handles and railings before and after service).

The last thing I think we need to keep in mind is that even with the above practices or agreed terms this doesn't 100% prevent or protect anyone from becoming COVID-19 positive. In the event of a positive COVID-19 from anyone worshiping at Wesley, in-person worship will stop. Wesley United Methodist Church will then go to strictly online worship until there is a vaccine and effective treatments that are readily available. As we prepare to reopen for in-person worship we ask that you continue to pray for your leadership and the volunteers who will help make this happen. Until then, be safe and be well and always be sure to check out the latest information on Facebook and our website ([www.gfwesley.org](http://www.gfwesley.org)). And if you'd like to receive "Wesley Updates" via text be sure to text: **@txtwesley to: 81010**

In Christ,

***Rev. Jeff Lathrop***