



CANTON
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
cantonfirstumc.org

Update from Pastor Kenny

(Canton, GA, July 16, 2020 - 10:00 AM)

Canton First Family and Friends,

I pray you are well and experiencing God, even in these uncertain times. It is my honor to be one of your pastors and to walk alongside you as together we navigate what it looks like to be the Body of Christ now more than ever.

As you well know, we all are learning to adapt quickly to the ever-changing situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Acting responsibly and reasonably demands that we have a “Plan B” to fall back on when “Plan A” no longer works, and sometimes we need a “Plan C.” This is the situation we now find ourselves in concerning in-person worship services.

In light of the increase in COVID-19 cases throughout Georgia, the North Georgia Conference of The United Methodist Church has urged all congregations to suspend indoor, in-person worship services until the number of cases in our area decrease to a sustained, safe level. Therefore, in consideration with CDC, local, state, and Conference guidelines, we have prayerfully made the decision to return to online livestream only worship until we can safely gather in-person again. You will be able to join our live worship services every Sunday at 9:00a (Modern) and 11:00a (Traditional) at <https://cantonumc.online.church/>.

One of the sources used by the Conference in this decision is “risk level” identified by Harvard Global Health Institute. Based on this information, along with state and CDC guidance, the Conference has set the following criteria:

Red – No in-person gatherings and staff working remotely.

Orange – In-person gatherings held outdoors and staff working onsite while meeting local, state, and CDC guidelines.

Yellow – In-person gatherings can return indoors while meeting local, state, and CDC guidelines.

Green – Resume full operations.

To monitor the current risk level by county, please see globalepidemics.org.

This new guidance will also affect smaller in-person gatherings such as Sunday School classes and Bible studies that want to meet indoors, on-campus, and partner organizations that want to use of our facilities. The staff and I will make a decision about these activities soon and share that information with you as soon as it is available.

While these decisions certainly touch our emotions and may feel like we are “going backwards,” we are not. This is a dynamic, ever-changing situation and we now have solid, effective safety measures in place when we can gather in-person again. Additionally, the last few months have allowed us to make great improvements in our online and livestream capabilities, including an upgrade to our video camera system that will be installed soon.

Please know that the safety and well-being of our church family is our top priority. Just as importantly, we will continue to care for the spiritual and physical needs of our church family, neighbors, and community. We also will continue to meet the needs of others in whatever ways God provides.

As we navigate the weeks and months ahead, I thank all of you for your continued patience, support, and understanding as we make the best, most responsible and reasonable decisions we can in response to this pandemic. And I urge you to keep informed by signing-up for our church newsletter, as well as checking the church website often. If you would like to be added to our newsletter or verify that your information is correct, please contact Anne at the Church Office at (770) 479-2502.

If you have additional questions or concerns, please email me at kenny.ott@cantonumc.org or Pastor Kelly at kelly.beckley@cantonumc.org, or call the Church Office at 770-479-2502.

Sincerely,
Pastor Kenny

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