



I am the vine, you are the branches
Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit." John 15:5

Mt. Zion family,

As you are aware by now, Bishop Holston has given United Methodist churches in South Carolina permission to begin worshipping in person as soon as June 14, as long as measures ensuring safety and social distancing are put into place. We are about to embark on what a mentor of mine would call a “holy experiment.” It is *holy* because we are seeking after God and asking God’s guidance and blessing. It is an *experiment* because we have never travelled this path before. There are no proven “best practices” here, only emerging ones. I thank you for the willingness you have already shown throughout this season to be flexible, to adapt, and to recognize that this is merely a season. If we treat these coming days as a holy experiment, then there is no such thing as failure, because we will be closer to discovering how to most effectively be the Church of Jesus Christ during these unique times.

After much prayer, research, guidance from denominational officials, conversations with other clergy colleagues, discernment with Mt. Zion church leaders, and feedback from the congregational survey, here is Mt. Zion’s plan for the next phase of this holy experiment:

June 14 and beyond: We will continue having an online worship service available each Sunday morning at 11 at [facebook.com/MtZionCentral](https://www.facebook.com/MtZionCentral).

June 14: There will be a “run-through” of all the necessary in-person worship procedures at 9:30 a.m. in the sanctuary for those who volunteered in the survey to help with hospitality and cleaning (if you’ve forgotten whether or not you signed up to help, we’ll send you a reminder!). We should be done in time for people to return home and participate in the pre-recorded on-line service at 11. (continued on page 2)

Pastor's note, continued from page 1

June 21 and 28: We will have a “test” in-person worship service in the sanctuary each of these two Sundays at 11. Although many people are eager to get back into what worship looked like before the coronavirus (including me!), the reality is that worship will look and feel *very different*. The worship committee and I thought it was important to give people the chance to experience this difference before committing to a long-term plan. In order to promote social distancing, these two “test” services are **limited to 20 people each**, and you must [sign up ahead of time here](#).

Below are the procedures for these two “test” services.

- **Age and health considerations:** Based on guidance from the [conference](#) and [CDC](#) that people 65 and older, along with those with preexisting medical conditions, are more at risk for illness and death, we strongly encourage at this time that those two groups of people continue participating in church activities virtually rather than in-person. This recommendation is made out of concern for the health and safety of people who are more susceptible to COVID-19.
- **Entering and exiting:** There will be a greeter on the front steps to open the door for you. Another greeter near the altar rail will direct you where to sit. We will fill the sanctuary from the front pew to the back, leaving at least 6 feet between people who do not reside together. At the conclusion of the service, we will dismiss the back pews first and work our way to the front.
- **Masks:** Everyone attending worship in-person is *strongly encouraged* to wear a mask. Remember that masks are for the protection of others. Please bring your own mask if you have one already. Masks will be provided to those who do not have one.
- **Offering:** Rather than passing offering plates, offerings may be deposited in the boxes that will be placed by each entrance to the sanctuary. Offerings may also be mailed to the church (PO Box 186, Central, SC 29630) or given [online](#). (continued on page 3)

Pastor's note, continued from page 2

- **Singing in worship:** We will not be singing in worship during these “test” services. This is based on recommendations from health professionals and [conference leadership](#) that suggest that singing, even with a mask on, would likely promote the spread of COVID-19.
- **Cleaning:** The sanctuary will be thoroughly cleaned before and after each service. Bathrooms will be cleaned between each use.
- **Nursery:** There will be no nursery during worship, as we cannot ensure that young children will practice social distancing. Families are encouraged to worship together in the sanctuary.

Those who participate in these “test” in-person worship services will have the opportunity to share feedback that will help guide Mt. Zion’s leadership about whether or not in-person worship in the sanctuary is our most fruitful option for facilitating worship and community at this time.

As a friend of mine recently shared, returning to a way of worshipping together that feels normal won’t be sudden, like flipping a light switch. It will be gradual, like slowly turning up a dimmer. As we slowly and gradually work toward the time when we will eventually be able to all be present together in one place, I thank you for the ways you continue to do transformative ministry and show the world that the Church has never been closed, only the building!

In Christ,

Pastor Jonathan

The Church Calendar at a glance

- June 2** - Final session of “Come, Follow Me” Bible Study, 6:30 p.m. ([link here](#))
- June 9** - Bible study, 6:30 p.m. ([link here](#))
- June 14** - Run-through of in-person worship procedures in sanctuary, 9:30 a.m.
- June 16** - Bible study, 6:30 p.m. ([link here](#))
- June 21** - **Happy Father’s Day!**
- June 21** - “Test” in-person worship service in sanctuary, 11 a.m. ([sign up here](#))
- June 23** - Bible study, 6:30 p.m. ([link here](#))
- June 28** - “Test” in-person worship service in sanctuary, 11 a.m. ([sign up here](#))
- June 30** - Bible study, 6:30 p.m. ([link here](#))
- July 4** - **Happy Independence Day!**
- July 7** - Bible study, 6:30 p.m. ([link here](#))
- July 14** - Bible study, 6:30 p.m. ([link here](#))
- July 21** - Bible study, 6:30 p.m. ([link here](#))
- July 28** - Bible study, 6:30 p.m. ([link here](#))

Nursery Workers

Due to the coronavirus, there will be no nursery during the “test” in-person worship services.

Coming Soon in Worship!

A Different *Kind*
of Community



Every Sunday this summer at 11 a.m.
Mt. Zion United Methodist Church
Streaming at [facebook.com/MtZionCentral](https://www.facebook.com/MtZionCentral)

The church is a *different kind of community* now than in February. It is called to be a *different kind of community* than the divisions, animosity, and apathy that mark much of the world today. Join with others this summer as we navigate the new kind of community the church is becoming in this season and model for the world an alternative way of being that is shaped by the love and kindness of Jesus!



Thank you to the family that donated some new equipment to improve the quality of Mt. Zion's online worship services! That was a generous gift that is making a huge impact on our online presence!



June Birthdays

2nd Dot Wilbanks - **2nd** Ashley Gelder - **8th** Beth McWilliams
12th Doug Walker - **14th** Holly Gelder - **14th** Ansel Miller
16th Jerry Chandler - **16th** John Malmgren - **17th** Edith Wisham
17th Isaiah Mullinax - **21st** Fred Cone - **21st** Karen Smith
21st Anna Ray - **26th** Randy Martin - **29th** Zechariah Copeland

July Birthdays

1st Tyler Ferguson - **2nd** Vicki Miesbauer - **9th** Sam Blackman
9th Wes Witcher - **10th** Marissa Harris - **11th** Albert Drexler
11th Libba Carson - **14th** Braelin Cumbie - **19th** Paige Campbell
20th Sonny Sims - **23rd** Loretta Todd - **24th** Tommy Still
27th Nelson Rice - **28th** Ann Wilbanks - **30th** Al Cumbie
31st Sharon Chandler



June Anniversaries

5th Benji and Heather Cumbie

8th Stan and Cindy Owens

24th Mac and Beth McWilliams

July Anniversaries

2nd Dick and Helen Singleton

13th Kris and Elizabeth Bowman

17th Jonathan and Marissa Harris

21st Tommy and Kathy Still

22nd Charles and Pam Baker

28th Herb and Karen Sprouse

Trustee News



Thanks to Al Cumbie for putting up three new visitor parking signs in Mt. Zion's parking lot! These signs will help increase Mt. Zion's welcome to visitors as people begin venturing out to worship in-person.

In early June, the trustees will have black metal railings installed along each side of the church to prevent anyone from falling over those drop-offs and to comply with our insurance company. Thank you for looking out for the safety of our children and neighbors!

In early June, seven of the pine trees at the parsonage will also be removed. These trees are very close to the house and created some concern during the recent severe storms and tornados.

Thank you trustees for your work on these efforts!

Quarantine Celebrations

See below how a virus hasn't stopped Mt. Zion's ministry to our community!



Thanks to everyone who shared their time, talents, and resources to assist with **tornado relief in Seneca** from April 14-21. Mt. Zion's presence and involvement made a huge impact that others noticed. Thank you!



Thanks to all who have helped make **on-line worship** happen these past few months! Music has been provided by Barbara Anderson, Allan Bomar, Connie Hopkins, Serena Miles, John Reeves, and Gail Wingard. Thanks to Ethan Green, Kris and Grayson Bowman, and Jerry Chandler for your help with technology!



Blood drive a success!

Thanks to everyone who gave blood and volunteered for the mobile blood drive in Mt. Zion's parking lot on May 9! The Blood Connection received enough blood to save roughly 70 lives. Way to go!

Discipleship for Children and Youth!



Children (infants-rising 5th graders) are invited to virtual Sunday school lessons with our wonderful children's ministry intern, Zechariah, from 9:15-10 a.m. beginning June 7. Each week's children's lesson about loving God and our neighbors goes along with that Sunday's sermon! Links and passwords for each week's lesson will be emailed out with the bulletin.

Youth (rising 6th-12th graders) are invited to virtual Sunday school lessons from 9:15-10 a.m. that are geared toward their older age level, beginning June 7. [The lesson link](#) will allow you to be part of a youth lesson about loving God and our neighbors that goes along with that week's sermon!

Discipleship for Adults!

Each Tuesday evening at 6:30 you are invited to Bible Study via Zoom!



June 2 is the final week of our study, “Come Follow Me.” Don’t miss this last session!

Want to dive deeper into what you heard on Sunday, learn from others, and share your own insights? You’re invited to our upcoming study, “A Different Kind of Community,” beginning June 16. Each Tuesday’s gathering goes along with the previous Sunday’s sermon (and the lessons the children and youth are learning!). Just [follow the link](#) and join in!



Other opportunities! Some of you indicated in the recent congregational survey an interest in creating virtual Sunday school opportunities for adults or other ways of fellowship and growth. Be on the look-out for additional opportunities!

Mt. Zion United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 186
310 Church Street
Central, South Carolina 29630

Address Correction Requested



Look what Mt. Zion received in the mail. Thank you for your faithful support of Epworth Children's Home!