

Baldwin Community United Methodist Church



... makes the presence of God real!

5001 Baptist Road

Pittsburgh, PA 15236

Phone: 412.882.9300

www.baldwincommunityumc.com

Dear friends,

As promised, I have been carefully watching as the number of new COVID-19 cases has dramatically risen in our area over the past several weeks. The Allegheny County Health Department's latest order on July 17th implemented stricter measures to slow the spread of COVID-19, including prohibiting indoor gatherings of more than 25 people. As of today, our county has seen a reduction in virus spread over the past few days, but the county and state mandates have not yet been lifted. Even yesterday, the White House Coronavirus Task Force spokesperson, Dr. Deborah Birx, called on Pittsburgh to take a more aggressive stance in reducing positive cases of COVID-19.

Leading the church with wisdom and grace is, at best, difficult during a pandemic. The staff and I have worked tirelessly to make sure that Baldwin Community UMC has been provided the best possible ministry while preventing spread of the virus in our congregation and community. We want you to know that we feel the disappointment, discouragement, and anger at not being able to control our circumstances or perform ministry as we have been trained to. We are not alone. In a recent survey of local congregations, we are all making the hard decisions necessary to protect the health and well being of each congregation.

And so it is with heavy hearts that we announce that to do our part to limit the spread of the virus and to comply with local and state mandates, we will only be broadcasting worship online from the sanctuary on August 2nd. There will be no in-person worship in our sanctuary until the numbers of new COVID-19 infections are more stable and our local and state governments permit indoor gatherings for the size of our congregation.

Until that time, I invite you to join me for in-person worship in an outdoor setting on Wednesday evenings. For those longing for in-person worship, this will be a midweek time to gather outdoors, greet one another at a safe distance, and worship God with a brief time of evening vespers. I will send out more details soon, including location, time, and dates.

I would invite you to join with me in praying the question, "How can I make this trying time matter for myself and those around me?" Your creative ideas are welcome as we move into the fall. Please feel free to share your ideas! Right now we are planning to offer Saturday night online worship at 7pm broadcast from the chapel, Sunday morning livestream at 10am from the sanctuary, outdoor vespers on Wednesday evenings, Adult Sunday school at 11am on Zoom, Children's Sunday school at 9am on Zoom, youth group, small groups, book studies and more, offering ways for you to grow as a disciple of Christ. We will stay connected by reaching out to one another in love. And we will continue to serve the community through the Lord's Pantry, the summer lunch program for kids in the community, and by filling other needs as they arise.

Please join me in praying for the health and well being of our congregation and community. Together, let us move forward in hope.

In Christ,

Pastor Pamela S. Gardner