



Mechanic Grove Church of the Brethren

Continuing the Work of JesusPeacefully, Simply, Together

July 20, 2020

Dear Church Family,

We're past the midpoint of the year, and it's obvious that none of us expected to be quite where we are when we started the year on January 1st. We continue to find ourselves in the midst of a global pandemic with what feels like ever increasing case counts. We are thankful that the southern end has been spared some of the worst of the pandemic so far, but we certainly need to keep our Amish neighbors in prayer. In addition, we should all remember our neighbors who have lost jobs or had their livelihoods affected by the shutdowns associated with the coronavirus.

On July 5 we returned to indoor, in-person worship gatherings, after nearly four months worshipping in other ways. Many of you have let us know that it still doesn't quite feel the same. An increasing number have suggested moving to outdoor worship, where we can physically distance and more of us can be together. Last Wednesday, July 15, new guidance was issued by the Commonwealth regarding large gatherings. While churches are technically exempt from this mandate, we are still encouraged to follow it and we want to continue being the best neighbors we can be and doing all that we can to protect one another and our community from this deadly virus. As you know, we had already been planning to do outdoor worship on July 26 and August 30. With this new guidance in mind, as well as the desire some have expressed to worship outside during this time, we will move our worship to our pavilion for the duration of August. That means from July 26-August 30 we'll be worshipping in the grove at 9:30am on Sundays. In the case of inclement weather, we will have a live streamed service at 9:30am.

For these outdoor services, please plan to bring a lawn chair. If folks consistently maintain a minimum of six feet of separation, wearing a mask is not mandatory outdoors. As you are choosing whether to mask, please bear in mind that choosing to do so may help to protect the health of your brothers and sisters. At the very least it may make them more comfortable worshipping. Whether you mask or not, it is important for us to maintain physical distancing of 6+ feet, so when you set up your chairs, imagine a dairy cow from snout to rump between you and the folks around you. Couldn't fit a cow in that space? Please move further away. We know that some of you will be uncomfortable coming to worship, especially with masking being left to individual choice. We encourage you to continue joining us via live stream. We know that some may not want to maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet. We encourage you to continue joining us via live stream.

Senior Pastor: Calvin Park

Youth & Young Adult Pastor: Jeff Keller

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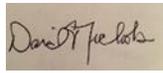
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To wrap up, a quick word specifically from Pastor Calvin: we're living in the midst of a hugely frustrating and uncertain time. But I'm actually pretty excited about this movement to outdoor services. Several folks have talked to me about wanting to gather "the whole church," and while we certainly won't achieve that, I hope by having a single service outdoors we will be able to gather in one spot at one time during this season. I'm hopeful that we'll be ministered to by the Holy Spirit as we worship. There'll be some inconveniences (weather, setup) to be sure, but I hope that we'll find outdoor worship to be more meaningful than indoor worship during this time. Whether you're joining us in person or via live stream, I—and here I think I speak for all four of us—look forward to worshipping with you!

Grace & Peace,



Calvin Park
Senior Pastor



Dave Nichol
Moderator



Derrick Kreider
Church Board Chair



Philip Johnson
Church Board Vice-chair