



Elder Team Update—November 20, 2020 Moving to Zoom (COVID-19 Precautions)

The local health care facilities are starting to be overwhelmed by the caseload census. Many hospitals have their ICU floors meeting capacity pressure. When there is pressure on the ICU and med/surg floor capacity, the hospital's normal workload is interfered with. Surgeries are scheduled further out; people can become sicker for reasons that have nothing to do with COVID. As the Church, the very institution that started the concept of hospitals, we need to pay attention to these very real, local pressures on our health care systems. (adapted from LMC correspondence).

As a member of the Lancaster Mennonite Conference, the community of Lebanon County, and the larger Church of Jesus Christ, we take the health and wellbeing of our community and our church members seriously. Numerous attendees have expressed significant discomfort with continuing our in-person church worship services with the rise of COVID cases in Lebanon County. Although we have taken many precautions to keep our church family safe since moving indoors, the risk continues to rise. As we are entering the winter season, people are moving indoors more. As a result, we are experiencing an unprecedented number of COVID cases in Lebanon County. This is very likely to worsen with the upcoming holidays. For this reason, Sunday, November 22, 2020 will be our last in-person church service for the next couple months. We are hopeful to resume our in-person gatherings beginning in February. From now through the end of January it is predicted to be the worst period for COVID. We will continue to monitor the cases in Lebanon county throughout this time and will inform you if there are any changes in plans. The recent news on COVID vaccines looks very promising; so, take heart, this will not go on forever.

What does this mean for Gingrichs Mennonite Church?

It means we have an opportunity to do something different!

1. Opportunity

Despite the countless ways the coronavirus has frustrated us and complicated our lives, it has also provided unique opportunities. Can we look beyond our own difficulties and offer a message of hope and love to those suffering around us? While in-person worship is vital to our church's growth, living on mission every day and having the mission of Jesus Christ before us all is still our call. I am hopeful that through these next two months (Advent, Christmas, and the New Year), God's Spirit will unite us in this common mission.

2. Something

When God brings these opportunities into our lives, we are given a choice. How will we navigate these times when so much seems out of our control? How will we choose to maintain community so that we can continue to be on mission? How can we allow our frustrations and disappointments to be used by God in our lives? What will be our something?

3. Different

Only you know the answer to those questions, but I bet it will need to look different. For Gingrichs Mennonite, our Sunday morning gathering will still be happening, *just differently*. At 10:15 am, we are asking all to join our live worship service via this Zoom link ([Click Here](#)). We are aware that not everyone is a fan of Zoom, but coming to church from the comfort of your own home does have its perks. This will not last forever, so let's spur one another on to see the positives. We are inviting all to participate so that we can collectively worship God. Please note that joining this service does not mean you have to participate with your video picture. You do not even need to say anything. You can simply listen. Our live services will be different than our previous Zoom times in the spring—including a live message. There are other different and exciting things that we have planned for Advent and Christmas Eve using live Zoom, so stay tuned!

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to any member of the Elder Team
Sincerely,

The Elder Team

Myron Miller, Carol Hershey, Tom Turley, and Pastor Amanda Rohrer