

December 8, 2020

Dear Westwood Church family,

Isaiah prophesied during a time of great difficulty, uncertainty, and fear. So, God gave His Old Testament people a sign to assure them that their God was still with them: "Therefore the LORD Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). That sign still stands for us today.

Trusting God during times of difficulty, uncertainty, and fear is hard. So, let us look to the sign of the virgin who gave birth to a son who was in every sense of the word, Immanuel, God with us. Jesus is the sign of God's loving involvement in His world. May this prophecy and its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus, comfort you and give you peace as 2020 comes to a close with COVID-19 still very much a part of our world.

Ministry Council held a Zoom meeting on Monday to again assess the effects of COVID-19 in our area. Currently, daily cases and hospitalizations, although still high, are declining. In light of this information, as well as the safety measures our church has adopted (wearing a face mask inside the building, physically distancing ourselves from one another by at least 6 feet, using hand sanitizer upon entering and exiting the building), Ministry Council has decided to resume in-person worship beginning this Sunday, December 13, for those who would like to worship in person. We also remain committed to live stream our worship services on YouTube, as well as Facebook and our church website. We want to provide a safe and meaningful worship experience whether you choose to worship in person or at home. We will stay in contact with local health officials who are closely monitoring COVID-19 in our area and will communicate any changes as needed.

To make sure that we have planned adequately for those who choose to attend in person, we are asking that each week you email Ginny at ginny@westwoodcrc.org or call the church office at 269-381-8691 BY NOON ON FRIDAYS to let us know how many will be attending.

Since positive cases and hospitalizations remain high in our area, Ministry Council has decided that with the exception of Sunday morning worship, the church building is closed to all groups, gatherings, and casual drop-ins (with the exception of church staff and those involved in worship) until further notice. Also, for those who attend Sunday worship, we are asking that you do not socialize in the building following the service, but exit the building as promptly as possible.

While we move forward into the uncertainty of the end of this year and into the new one as well, we encourage each of you to reach out to others, in whatever manner you can, to offer help, a listening ear, shared food, a card or call, or to ask for the help that you need to navigate this difficult time. Please be aware that Pastor Mike, our ministry staff, as well as your district elder and deacon stand ready to walk alongside of you. We all share one Lord, one faith, and one hope in the love and care of our Heavenly Father as experienced through the members of His body, the church.

Serving Christ together,

The Ministry Council of Westwood Church