



Pastor Christopher Kostyn Passante

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Greetings, Brothers & Sisters in Christ–

There is no doubt that in this time of taking every precaution to prevent the spread or contamination of the coronavirus, the way we do things has changed drastically. After much prayer, research, conversation and information and advice from church colleagues to local, state and national government health agencies and experts, Mount Nittany Church has cancelled or postponed all events, activities and gatherings on campus until further notice. This includes any public or private events in our Family Life Center, but also small groups, regular meetings, special events, Bible studies, youth and child groups, community dinners, etc.

One of those gatherings is our Sunday worship. Live worship will resume as soon as officials and our safety team declares live gatherings safe again

This is certainly a hard time, and we absolutely recognize that during crises such as this, the Church is a place where people gather for comfort, reassurance and to serve. This mission has not changed; however, the way we do it has.

I urge you to stay connected with your family at Mount Nittany Church. As of right now, we will continue live broadcasting our 9 a.m. Sunday worship via live stream on our Facebook page, Mt Nittany UMC. The virtual services will be broadcast from the church sanctuary, and it will go live at 9 a.m. Sunday, but also will be available to watch on the Facebook page and our Website MtNittanyUMC.org at your own convenience. It will include live worship music, our Lenten Devotional, Scripture readings, a message by Pastor Chris and Prayers of the People – including live prayer requests and those that are emailed/phoned in. To be able to worship and participate in real-time is one of the most important aspects of how we gather as the people of God, and technology that helps us do that is a valuable gift.

As always, Pastor Chris' Sunday sermons will be available to watch on our website, MtNittanyUMC.org. Other current and new efforts to stay connected are:

- * Our Daily Lenten Devotionals, posted on our Facebook page each morning by 6 a.m. They are available for the following week in print, but via email request only (MtNittanyOffice@gmail.com);
- * Daily Bible Readings, posted on our Facebook page each morning;
- * Daily Worship – Check out our Facebook page for shared video uploads;

- * Bulletin w/hymn lyrics – before each Sunday Worship Service, we will make available an online bulletin that you can print or download, which will have the order of worship as well as the hymn lyrics so you can worship from home;

Even more ways to stay connected include checking in one another via telephone, email or text. This is important, especially for those who are homebound and at-risk. We understand that not everyone is connected via the Internet or Facebook; if you can help others to connect or at least share this and other online information that you know they aren't receiving, please do so.

Social distancing means we cannot gather; however, we can pray together and we can be Christ's Body in this world. I encourage you to read your Bibles or our online Bible plans and video devotionals daily. Take prayer walks around your neighborhood in which you pray for each of your neighbors as you pass their homes. Look for creative ways to gather virtually – hosting a Bible study via computer or telephone. And know that we are working on several more initiatives to keep us all connected through these difficult times, including an online Bible study and possibly book club.

The Church's mission never stops – it's exactly what we're called to do. Remember, the Church isn't the building; it's the people of God acting as the hands and feet of Christ in our world. To assure the Church can function, know that your gifts and tithes are very much needed at this time. While we can't present our offerings during live worship together, we can use two options:

- * You may mail your weekly tithes to 1500 E. Branch Road, State College, PA 16801;
- * Give electronically at www.MtNittanyUMC.org. Click the "Online Giving" button on the top right of the home page screen.

If you know of people who haven't received this letter via email, please let them know about these important updates. If they have email, but we don't have their email address in our database, please give that information to the church office MtNittanyOffice@gmail.com or at 814.237.3549.

Finally, the church office most likely will have abbreviated hours through this time. If you must visit the physical office, please call before heading out at 814.237.3549. Know, too, that Pastor Chris will be available by phone (814.232-1717), but will not be able to make visits, regular office hours or Coffee with the Pastor till further notice.

This pandemic has us making very hard, but prayerful decisions day by day and sometimes hour by hour. While we might not know what the future holds, we do know Who holds it. I encourage you to remain in prayer – pray for your neighbors, pray for the church, pray for the safety and comfort of the world. As Christians, we know firsthand the power of prayer, and we worship a Great, Big God. Let's ask for great big things! Until that time comes, stay safe, cherish the times of quietness by going to the Lord, and reaching out to others who need to hear a kind voice.

Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. – Isaiah 41.10.

Yours In Christ's Abundant Blessings,

Pastor Chris