

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

One of the lost practices of the Bible is lamenting. Biblical lament is a divine invitation to cry out our fears, frustrations, sorrows and pain, for the purpose of renewing our confidence in God. It seems very appropriate to do this during these times when, as I said in this week's sermon, there is no denying the racism in our judicial system. I would invite us to lament over what is happening in our country. To cry out to God our frustrations and sadness about the rising violence and our undeniably racist justice system. In this week that we celebrate our Nation's Independence, may we be mindful of lamenting so that we can be moved forward in seeking God's ways of peace, hope, love and joy.

Worship is one way we respond to our renewed confidence in God after a time of lament. That said, it is with great joy in the Lord, that I share with you that Rev. Ed Freeborn will be joining us again this week as our guest pastor. This service will be held indoors in the Phase 1 format of our re-opening with one change to that plan. Because Monroe County is in the green phase, we can add an additional 20 people or so to the sanctuary during worship and remain 6ft apart. I kindly ask that we respect those who are guiding you to sit, so that we can ensure we are following our guidelines. Note we ask that, as much as you can tolerate, keep the masks on, even while seated. Additionally, those who are remaining to worship at home can do so through our Live Streaming on Facebook and YouTube. Do not feel obligated to come to service and if you are ill or have any symptoms of illness, kindly stay resting at home. Just as a friendly reminder, below are the guidelines again.

- We ask that you wear a mask to enter and exit building and keep it on when leaving your seat for any reason. If you can tolerate it please keep it on while seated (if you need a mask contact the church and we can get you one).
- Please always practice social distancing of 6ft apart. There will be volunteers and markers to help assist in keeping our distances. Families can remain together in line and in their seats.
- We will be dismissing in an orderly fashion which will be directed by a volunteer for each room.
- Offering is a drop off style where baskets or offering plates will be available upon exiting.
- When entering the building, there will be guides taped on the ground to display 6ft apart as you may have to wait a short bit to enter and be guided to the appropriate room.
- Hymnals and Bibles will not be used, but the music and scriptures will be printed in the bulletin.
- The service will remain a shortened service style that we have been using since we went to online streaming.

May we spend time lamenting to God about all that is going on in our world. Ask God how you might be called to help God's kingdom on earth be realized. Then come together for worship in new forms that embrace God's ways of peace, hope, love and joy.

In Christ Peace,

Pastor Nicki