

## *Grace and Peace Notes*

Dear Ones,

I am so looking forward to serving as your lead pastor! And to working with the excellent staff already in place. I am now in Nebraska and working on unpacking boxes ... so many boxes.

My first Sunday with you is also the first Sunday back in the sanctuary. I am grateful for the careful planning that is in place for this transition back. It will feel different and awkward from the familiar way of being together. Different and awkward are OK. I am planning to bring along a lot of grace, a lot of patience, and a sense of humor — I hope you will consider these essentials, too.

We are all doing our best in discombobulating circumstances and we will figure this out together. The value I return to time and again through this pandemic, is what do I need to do to keep my neighbors, my parishioners, my colleagues safe?

Grace, peace, Pastor Mary Kay

### *Special Transition Sunday Worship Service*

On June 28th, we will have a Special Transition Sunday Worship Service at 10:30am in the Seward United Methodist parking lot. We will have our District Superintendent Reverend Dr. Nancy Tomlinson here with us to share the message and transition the "mantle" with the Seward United Methodist Church special stole from Pastor Robert Perry to Pastor Mary Kay Totty.

### *Church Building Re-Opens to the Public in July*

The Seward United Methodist Church building will have a soft re-opening starting in July. The front doors will be unlocked only on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00am - 3:00pm when you can access the office area. Please call ahead to be sure the building is open. The black mailbox has a locked area where you can leave notes/checks/etc. if you find the building inaccessible.

## *Return to In-Person Worship in July*

Starting on July 5th, we will gather inside the sanctuary for Sunday ONE Worship. The front/West red doors on 5th Street will be where all Seward United Methodist Church family and friends will enter and exit. The back/East doors are exclusively for Bright Beginnings Child Development Center and Food Net.

Wednesday FOCUS Worship will also gather inside the sanctuary starting July 8th although we may decide to meet outside if the weather is favorable. Any last minute changes will be set out via One-Call phone call and/or email/text.

Starting Sunday July 5th, the front doors will open at 10:10am to facilitate getting everyone settled for worship at 10:30am. Initially, we will be limited to approximately seventy people in the sanctuary. We will add back in the 8:15am worship service as we have need to expand but until then, we will provide *overflow* seating in the Fellowship Hall.

## *Special Instructions for Sunday and Wednesday In-Person Worship*

- A Welcome Team member will help direct flow into the sanctuary each worship gathering.
- If you or anyone in your household is sick, or if you are at high risk of contracting the virus, you are encouraged to stay home and continue to worship with us online until further notice. Please monitor your health symptoms to help you make the best decision about attendance. Please do not attend if you have a temperature or are sick.
- In order to follow the state-distancing guidelines, we have determined that we can seat 60 or so people into units/bubbles or groups who live/stay together. We have two areas reserved for those with young children, at the back, in the event you need space to spread out a bit more or your unit/bubble group will feel more secure behind the glass at the back of the sanctuary.
- Please maintain six-foot distancing as you enter. You will be ushered to a seating location so that the sanctuary is filled from the front to the back. Please stay seated until it is time to exit, unless you have an emergency/restroom need.
- ***You are strongly encouraged to wear masks at all times.*** Pastors, musicians, and readers are excluded for their parts of the service, as they will be more than 12-20 feet away from the pews where folks are sitting. Shields will be used as they are able to be used. Please bring your own masks. The Seward United Methodist Church team will provide you with a cloth mask if you do not have one. We will have a few available each week. This will be for you to keep and bring with you to future services.
- Pews will not have any books, etc. in them. Bring your own bibles/bulletins which are posted online ahead of time. The screen will be used also for sharing of the bulletins/words to read. Singing is discouraged at this time. Our worship team will lead

in singing, and we encourage soft clapping, snapping, or moving of hands to the music. Listen deeply to the words at this time.

- Offerings will be gathered at the door when you leave the sanctuary. There will be a box or basket for you to place these. As always, you can mail in items or drop them in the front black locked box for offerings. Please note on your envelope/check what they are for. Many thanks!
- Physical distancing is to be maintained at all times. Children will stay in pews during the Children's Time. There will be no children's bags. Feel free to bring your own items for children to use. Be sure to have some conversation with your children/young people about the "changes" they will see, hear, and be asked to do. Help to prepare them ahead of time for this to ease any anxiety they may have and to answer the questions they have. Children need this added time, before we meet in person. Thank you!!!
- If a child needs to leave the sanctuary to use the bathroom, a parent/guardian is to accompany them. Please use restrooms for emergency use only. We ask that you spray/clean things you might touch inside the restrooms.
- Holy Communion is to be brought by you for your unit/bubble. Bring juice/water in a closed container and bread/crackers in a Ziplock bag. Elements will be blessed during worship. Those participating in worship online will gather items for home usage also.
- After our worship gathering you will be dismissed in an orderly manner out the building, as directed by our Welcome Team.
- After worship, please go directly outside and maintain physical distancing on the lawn/parking lot areas as folks are leaving.
- Overflow seating will be provided in the Fellowship Hall. You would be directed to pick out your own chair and place it in your unit/bubble spread six feet apart. Afterwards, you return the chair as directed and then they will be cleaned. All of the pews/chairs are disinfected after worship by Campbell's Cleaning.
- A [Checklist](#) has been developed by the Great Plains Conference and is available on the front page of the [sewardumc.org](http://sewardumc.org) Website.

Many thanks for assisting with these efforts to find our new normal in these times. Thank you for reading and following these procedural guidelines.

Your Pastors and Staff appreciate your continued support and grace in these times!

## *Vacation Bible School at Camp Fontanelle Digitally!*

It's time to go ahead and sign up for our Vacation Bible School offering of heading to Camp Fontanelle digitally! Go to the link and sign up for the camp of your choice. United Methodist Women will pay half, and we can pay half, as needed, so that all children and youth can attend this summer. They have lots of fun things planned and we are so glad we can continue to support our local United Methodist Church camp at this time.

Sign-up soon and [email Pastor Jo Ellen](mailto:joellen@campfontanelle.com) so she will know who needs funds sent on their way to camp. We can't wait to hear all about it! <http://www.campfontanelle.com/>

## *Zoom Games with Church Family and Friends*



Join us for *KAHOOT* on Sunday, June 28th from 5:00 - 6:20pm. All ages and stages are invited to play. Please [email Wess](mailto:wess@campfontanelle.com) to sign up each person in your group. He will be sending out instructions for this evening together. Cindy Butzke will be our game host and we are sure to have much fun!!!

## *Seward United Methodist Courtyard Outdoor Prayer Space*

Our new "God and Me Tree" is based on the idea from the book, Wishtree. We are adding our prayers to the tree with red string. Our prayers are stronger when we pray together. If you have prayer requests we invite you to email us, text us, or to call and share these. We have a ONE-Call prayer team, prayers during worship, and also pastors/staff who pray alongside you.

When we enter back into the building, the courtyard is an open outdoor space you can access on Tuesdays or Thursdays from 9:00am - 3:00pm. for time to sit and pray. We will have red string available for you to pray with and then add to our tree.

The front outside prayer benches are also available 24/7 in a well lit area for you to use for prayer time and reading. We invite you to use these spaces.

