



May 17, 2020

Dear Richfield UMC,

I pray this letter finds you in good health and good spirits. As our great state of Minnesota transitions from a “Stay at Home” order to a “Stay Safe” order this week, your elected leaders and I have been prayerfully weighing our options for our next steps as a church. I have said many times that there is what we are permitted to do, there is what we are prepared to do, and we journey into a reality where these two realms have conflux. I write to you now with news of our next steps as a church.

**As I announced in worship on Sunday, we are extending our suspension of in-person worship and all in-person gatherings through at least Sunday, September 6.** This decision was made with input from your elected leaders of the Ad Board, the ad hoc Executive Team, and our District Superintendent, Rev. Dan Johnson. Your safety is our most important concern and this decision is in alignment with this value.

We are stepping boldly into the summer with immediate actions:

- We have formed a **Reopening Response Taskforce** to take in the best guidance available and develop a plan of action that meets our church’s missional goals. Taskforce members include chair Nick Dewey, Gail Johnson, Wayne Johnson, Jerry Schilling, and Steve Restemayer.
- We are upgrading our current technology for online worship and implementing new technology so people who aren’t online can worship by touchtone phone.
- We are hard at work creating a quality summer season of ministry so we can continue to grow in love of God and neighbor, reach new people, and heal a broken world.
- We are developing a summer edition of *The Heartline* newsletter to arrive in your mailbox in early June. This issue will feature a special focus on spiritual practices.

Friends, you are a good church. You’re smart, you’re brave, and you’re faithful. I am consistently amazed by your stamina. I am so proud of the love and care you show one another. I am inspired by the emotional and spiritual vulnerability you offer one another. All of it matters. I am reminded of a line in our Breakthrough Prayer: “Unite us in your vision, equip us for your work.” United, we will keep learning how God reveals a divine vision for our future. And united, we are equipped for Spirit-filled work, sharing the love of Jesus. We aren’t together in the church building this season, and the church is *always* together in the heart of God! **I am proud to be your pastor!**

In Christ,

Rev. Nate Melcher  
Senior Pastor | [nmelcher@richfieldumc.org](mailto:nmelcher@richfieldumc.org)  
612.861.6086 Office | 612.399.6272 Mobile