



1300 Edgewood Drive  
Lima, Ohio 45805  
(419) 224-9951  
info@zionlima.org

*"...to serve all God's creation in faith and love."*

October 22, 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

I had been hoping and praying that I wouldn't have to write this letter; especially as we approach Reformation Sunday (and Confirmation) and All Saints' Sunday – two days in the church calendar that are particularly meaningful to me. And yet, today Allen County moved back into a Level 3 Public Emergency, turning red on the [Ohio Health Advisory Map](#). **According to our policy, this means that all in-person worship and meetings at Zion are suspended until Allen County returns to orange or yellow.** Although this is unfortunate news (to say the least), it was not entirely unexpected. So, we have been planning for this possibility for the past two weeks, rethinking and reimagining some of our upcoming plans. And so, what does this actually mean?

- **Worship** - We will live-stream our worship at 10:45 am from the Sanctuary. Only those leading will be present (Pastor Dan, Mary Jane, etc.). The congregation is invited to join online via our [website](#), [Facebook](#), or [YouTube](#).
- **Confirmation Sunday** - For this Sunday, only the Confirmands and their families will be present in order to still affirm their baptism and be confirmed, and ensure the health and safety of everyone.
- **Trunk or Treat** – We have switched this event to a Drive-Thru Trunk or Treat where kids and their families will remain in their cars and drive past our decorated trunks to receive candy. We believe this will limit exposure but still allow for a fun and much anticipated event.
- **All Saints' Sunday** (should we still be in the red) - We will still honor those who have died in the past year in our regular worship. However, in addition to that, we will hold an **outdoor vigil in our parking lot at 6:00 pm** where we will remember and honor all the other saints in our lives who have died in previous years. We will remain in our vehicles for this brief service.
- **Grief and Loss Discussion Groups & Galatians Study Groups** – The online sessions for these groups will continue on as scheduled. But if you have signed up for an in-person option, Corie will be contacting you soon.

I know that none of this is ideal or the way any of us would prefer it. The thought of stepping into a mostly empty Sanctuary on Sunday leaves me with a sinking feeling in my gut. But the church is not closing. The building may be closing. But the building is not the church, we are. And we are so much better equipped for being the church in times like these than we were in March, April, or May – than we were even a week ago. God continues to lead us in and through this unprecedented time, preparing and equipping us for all that lies ahead. I pray that you might be encouraged by that as much as I am and join me in prayer and hopeful anticipation when we can be together again.

In peace,  
Pastor Dan

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Dan Gutman  
Pastor

Sheila Stemen Smith  
Director of Administration  
& Community Engagement

Corie Steinke  
Director of Discipleship  
& Community Outreach

Lesia Brown  
Childcare Director