

FUMCLG Rally Day – Sunday, September 12, 2021
Rev. Cerna Castro Rand

Peggy Ellis and Jennifer Robison, directors of our Children and Family Ministry, and Hattie Koher, director of our Youth Ministry, sent out a joint letter last week to all church families about Rally Day. In it was a description of the exciting activities planned for Sunday, September 12, when we kickoff our fall regular happenings at church.

We have missed you this summer, and it would be so nice to see you back to church soon. We are here to welcome you back to church with warm greetings and positive energy. The staff and I are excited to receive you back at church after your summer pursuits and as we begin a new fall season at church. I hope and pray that you have had a great summer and am looking forward to coming back to church with exuberant joy.

May the enthusiasm of the Holy Spirit bless us as we celebrate Rally Day at our 8:30am (Chapel) and 10:15am (Sanctuary) in-person worship services and livestream worship service at 10:15am. Here are a few things to remember as we come back to church together:

- ❖ Our number one priority is for the safety of everyone: the staff, members of the church, students and staff of our Preschool and Parents Day Out, and everyone who uses our church building.
- ❖ We are following the health guidelines/protocols from the Center of Disease Control, Illinois Department of Public Health and Cook County Department of Public Health, and the UMC Northern Illinois ReTurn Task Force. As of Monday, August 23, Cook County, mandated that we wear masks during our indoor activities; worship services, funeral and memorial services, weddings, meetings, all large and small gatherings and when we are around other people inside the building.
- ❖ Our Methodist Preschool and Parents Day Out are back on Tuesday, September 7. We recommend that, when you come to the church during the days when the Preschool and Parents Day Out are in session, you use the Cossitt Avenue Door and check into the office on the second floor.
- ❖ Our summer renovations of the chapel, youth room, Sunday school rooms, and the kitchen are going well according to the plan. We can't wait for the renovations to be completed, and we'll have an open house later to celebrate these huge undertaking for the glory of God.

Yes, the COVID-19 Delta Variant is surging, but we are not stopping doing God's work. We will wear our masks during our gatherings, maintain proper hygiene, continue our routines of sanitizing and cleaning the building, and pray that the Lord will protect us from the Coronavirus as we safely do our ministry together. COVID-19 is challenging and at times disappointing, but I continue to find solace and strength from God and his words. As you struggle during these difficult times, may you find reassurance in these words of the psalmist: ***"I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber."*** (Psalm 121:1-3 New International Version). Let us trust the Lord in our distress and keep on forging ahead for Christ's sake.

The staff and I are praying for you, and we ask that you pray for us, as well, as we prepare for our Rally Day. Pray for all the volunteers who give their unceasing support for our ministry together. Pray, too, for the Methodist Preschool and Parents Day Out community as they fully re-open the school to families in our communities. Welcome back to church, folks!

Peace and Joy,

