

## **For the Common Good**

Written by Pastor Rick Sherrill

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*“Make sure you don't take things for granted and go slack in working for the common good; share what you have with others. God takes particular pleasure in acts of worship—a different kind of “sacrifice”—that take place in kitchens and workplaces and on the streets.”*

Hebrews 13:16 (The Message)

I pray you are healthy and continuing to seek God's guidance and peace today.

Earlier this week, the Prince of Peace church council voted to hold off on resuming in-person worship until at least August 1, 2020. This decision was made with clear eyes and heavy hearts. While there are many reasons behind this decision, there are two that are most important. First, with Covid-19 cases continuing to rise in Arizona, we place the highest priority on maintaining the health and safety of the most vulnerable among us. In short, we care so deeply about you that we feel led by God's Spirit to continue to physically separate for the common good. Second, we are listening to you. We have heard from a large majority of the Prince of Peace family that they will not be engaging in in-person worship this summer, including 75% of respondents in a recent survey. Included in that 75% are nearly all of our church council, worship volunteers and musicians. Without the critical human resources to make in-person worship happen effectively and safely this summer, the best and perhaps only course of action is to hold off for now. A task force has been assembled to put together a worship re-opening plan using the best information available.

This does not mean that the church is closed. Quite the opposite! God is working powerfully among us at this time. Online worship will continue throughout the summer and we have a renewed commitment to expanding both your involvement and our effectiveness in reaching new people. Bible studies, mutual support and service opportunities continue to expand in new and exciting ways. We are continuing to seek a new Director of Youth and Family Ministry to uplift our young people and their families. Most importantly, the Prince of Peace family is doing an awesome job caring for each other with phone calls, appropriate physical visits, prayers and delivering meals and many other kinds of support. By God's grace, Prince of Peace is strong and growing stronger.

On a personal note, I miss seeing the Prince of Peace family in person and my heart grieves at the loss of in-person worship for the next two months. Sometimes even good decisions bring pain. Serving as your pastor continues to be one of the greatest highlights of my life. If I can be of service to you, please contact me. I would love to know what is happening in your lives and how I can continue to support you and pray for you.

May you discover God's deep and sustaining blessings this summer.

For the common good, Pastor Rick