

Hi FPC Community!

We're doing something completely new for worship in September, with an outdoor service at 9:30 (weather permitting) and a zoom service at 11:15 (rain or shine). Something to note is that our outdoor services are different than previous ones, and our Zoom services have some changes as well. So please read the details! Here are all the details you might be interested in:

September Worship FAQ

Why Are the Times Different? A major reason is because our RE schedule is so different this year, with RE starting at the start of the worship hour, and including junior high youth in our first service, and being outside with tent set-up. But also, while we're outside the set-up for both worship and RE is more elaborate, and we wanted to not have to get all the volunteers up too early!

What Is Different Between the Two Services? Other than the obvious differences, like one being outside and the other on Zoom, there are a few things to note. Choir will only be at second service for now. And Michelle is teaching RE in the first service hour, so Cindy will be doing the message for all ages at the first service, with Michelle will doing them for the second service. Joys and sorrows have very different formats between the two services.

Radio Option: Our most frequent radio-listeners for worship are people who we believe will be able to access our other options this year, so we have not made arrangements for someone to set up the radio system for Sundays this year at this point. If you would find that option accessible, and the others are not accessible for you, please let me know, and we will try to reinstate the radio option.

What Will Happen in October? I'll let you know when I know!

9:30 Outdoor Service

Sound: Unlike flower communion in the spring, we will not be using our radio system, but rather a speaker system. So no need to bring a radio or anything else. While the radio system is better for hearing, it's more complicated in set-up, so for now we're foregoing it.

Chairs: We're encouraging you to bring your own chairs! But if you forget, we'll have a few set up.

Masks: Yes please! Our worship may include children who choose not to go to RE or unvaccinated adults, and we think it's safest for all if we wear masks. The speakers and soloists may be unmasked when speaking or singing.

Distancing: Please keep at least 3 feet between you and other family groups or individuals. We encourage you to ask other people what distance they're comfortable at. Not everyone is ready for 3-foot distance, so be courteous and check with folks and back up if needed. Thank you!

Children and Youth: RE starts at the same time as worship this year, so drop your kids off first before finding your worship seat. Signs will be posted telling you where to go. PreK to grade 5 are in the lawn by the lower parking lot near Fellowship Hall (by the playground) and Junior High Youth are behind the Connector and Fellowship Hall near what some of us call the “Kitchen Garden.” Children and youth should be masked, and there will be 3-foot distancing and no snacks during the RE time. Nursery Care is also provided during this time.

Nametags: If you want to go into the building and find your nametag, this is allowed. If we get enough volunteers, we may bring them out for you, too.

Restrooms: Yes, you may go in the building and use the restroom.

Singing and Music: There will be congregational singing and other music pieces provided by Sanghee, Brad, and occasionally guest performers.

Orders of Service: Paper orders of service will be provided, as well as a QR code for the website, where you’ll find a PDF.

Announcements: If you have an announcement to be read, please write it (you can use a joy and sorrow form if you need paper) and hand it to the person doing announcements *before* the service starts. We will not be allowing people to pop up and use the microphone who are not listed in the order of service, in order to minimize microphone-sharing.

Joys and Sorrows: Joys and sorrows can be emailed in advance to our lay ministers at caring@fpc-stow-acton.org, or you can fill out a form at the same table you pick up your order of service at. All joys and sorrows will be read by the minister or the lay ministers, to minimize sharing of microphones. Joys and sorrows we receive by email will be shared at both services unless otherwise indicated, which is one advantage to emailing it in advance to us. Those filled out by form at the service will not be generally shared at the 11:15 service, unless you make arrangements for it to be done.

Connections (not Coffee) Hour: Following the service, you’re invited to mingle and converse, and to check out our church life and visitor information table, and any other materials we have out for display about FPC events and programs. We will not be serving coffee, and if you bring your own, please keep a greater distance (6 feet) from others when eating and drinking. Because of the tight time-frame between services, your minister and staff may not be present long at connections hour, since we have a completely different set-up to complete before the second service.

Weather: If it looks rainy, chances are we’re canceling this service, so check FPC announce, the website, or the Facebook page for updates. The second service on Zoom will still be available (unless we have a power outage)!

Why Aren’t We Zooming This Service? Technology for Zooming a service from outside is much more complicated than Zooming from inside, and we also don’t have all of our technology pieces in place yet. We also have a very small pool of people who can make this happen, it takes

a long time, and setting it all up weekly is just too much. Once we're ready to move back into the sanctuary, we'll be zooming a service that is also in-person.

11:15 Zoom Service

Before the Service: Because once we move indoors, the zooming will be from the sanctuary, we're not starting with the pre-service slides this year at this time. We may also not be playing the bells video until we have some further Zoom training.

Children and Youth: There is no Pre-K through 8th RE or Nursery Care at the second services in September. High School Discussion Group will gather at 11 in order to allow parents time to drop off youth and get to the 11:15 Zoom service. Youth should be masked, and there will be 3-foot distancing and no snacks during the RE time.

Singing and Music: All singing is happening live this month for the Zoom services, with the Choir and Brad singing live from Fellowship Hall with Sanghee playing there, as well. The choir will be singing hymns, so we'll have more voices on those this year. Occasionally Sanghee may run up to do a piece on the organ, as well, live from the sanctuary.

Orders of Service: Orders of service will be on the website, and will be in the same format provided to people in-person at the 9:30 service.

Announcements: If you have an announcement to be read, please message the person doing announcements *before* the service starts.

Joys and Sorrows: Joys and sorrows can be emailed in advance to our lay ministers at caring@fpc-stow-acton.org, or you can unmute to share them yourself. This year the joys and sorrows will not be read from the chat, to make things a little easier on our team. Joys and sorrows we receive by email will be shared at both services unless otherwise indicated, which is one advantage to emailing it in advance to us.

Connections (not Coffee) Hour: Following the service, you will again be invited to break-out rooms for discussion. However, the plan is to do these a little differently this year, and you'll have your choice of what room to attend.

Weather: If it looks rainy, chances are we're cancelling the outside first service. This second service will still happen on Zoom (unless we have a power outage), so the nice thing about bad weather is that we'll have a larger crowd at the Zoom service.

Why Aren't We Zooming the In-Person Service? Technology for Zooming a service from outside is much more complicated than Zooming from inside, and we also don't have all of our technology pieces in place yet. We also have a very small pool of people who can make this happen, it takes a long time, and setting it all up weekly is just too much. Once we're ready to move back into the sanctuary, we'll be zooming a service that is also in-person.