

## **“COVID-19” PANDEMIC AND LCPC**

**NJ** - March 9, 2020 - NJ Governor Murphy declares a “State of Emergency”. The first “COVID-19-related” death in NJ is announced the next day.

March 12, 2020 – The LCPC “Weekly Update” contains a section entitled “We care about your health!” that includes tips on hand washing, “feeling free” about refraining from shaking hands, staying home when you feel sick, and safety practices regarding communion serving. Recommendations by the Center of Disease Control concerning “helping prevent the spreading of respiratory disease” are presented in it. The “Weekly Update” also contains information about a presentation by Rev. Anthony Thompson of Charleston, S.C. (“Freedom through Forgiveness”) on March 29, an “Easter Egg Hunt and Open House” on March 28, a “Spring Benefit” for the New City Kids on April 5, and a “Women’s Brunch” on May 2. Due to the COVID-19 “pandemic”, all of these events are ultimately cancelled or postponed. The “Easter Egg Hunt” is cancelled after first having been proposed to take place on a “drive through” basis, with an opportunity to “wave to the Easter Bunny while passing”.

**NJ** - March 13, 2020 – Bernards Township schools are closed after a half-day session.

March 13, 2020 – A presentation on LCPC history entitled “183 Years and 20 Pastors” scheduled to be held in the Amos Room is cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns.

March 15, 2020 – Regular Sunday services are held at LCPC. Alternating rows of seating are kept empty for “social distancing” purposes. “Social distancing” is a term that becomes popularly used in the ensuing days. Another term that becomes part of daily vocabulary in this period is “flattening the curve”. This refers to community isolation measures designed to keep the daily number of disease cases at a manageable level of treatment by the medical system. The outbreak of the disease is now being referred to as a “pandemic” (another new term for many of us). The term “herd immunity” is another term that is being used. A popular slogan is “Stop the Spread”.

**NJ** - March 16, 2020 – All NJ schools are ordered to be closed by March 18. Restaurants are closed for in-restaurant dining and movie theaters and gyms are closed.

March 19, 2020 – The LCPC “Weekly Update” advises that materials for “LC Kids” and “Student Ministry” will be available for “online learning” and that “Confirmation Class” will still meet, with “info” from “leaders” to be forthcoming.

**NJ** - March 21, 2020 – “Non-essential” businesses are ordered to be closed. NJ residents are ordered to “stay at home” and “social gatherings” are banned. The term “lockdown” becomes popular in the news.

March 22, 2020 – A discussion of Max Lucado’s “Anxious for Nothing” begins in “Faith Café”, using the “Zoom” video conferencing application. Although not widely known-of by the general public prior to COVID-19, “Zoom” becomes a frequent tool in the coming weeks and months. Not surprisingly, its stock does very well!

**NJ** - March 25, 2020 – NJ “child care centers” such as “The Children’s Corner” are ordered closed by Executive Order of Governor Murphy.

March 29, 2020 – “New sermon discussion groups” to be held online using the “Zoom” video conferencing application are initiated “to help break through isolation and breed community where discipleship can flourish”.

**NJ** - April 3, 2020 – Flags in NJ are ordered to be flown at half-staff “indefinitely”. This directive is rescinded, however, effective July 4.

**NJ** - April 7, 2020 – NJ state and county parks are closed.

**NJ** - April 8, 2020 – Face coverings are ordered to be worn when shopping.

April 9, 2020 - “Small Groups” that will “meet” online are being organized so that participants can “find respite and a chance to reflect on a life of faith”.

April 9, 2020 – A “special interview” with psychologist Dr. Jim Owen entitled “Seeking Abundance: Anxiety” is posted online.

April 9, 2020 – A Maundy Thursday service is offered online. A “Resurrection Tree”, a palm cross and Easter eggs are made available for pick-up at the church.

April 10, 2020 – A Good Friday “Tenebrae” service is offered online.

**NJ** – April 10, 2020 – A news report states that there are 58,151 reported cases of COVID-19 in NJ and 2,183 deaths in NJ attributable to COVID-19.

April 12, 2020 – An Easter Sunday service is offered online. The “Viral Faith” online sermon series based on Romans 8 starts with a sermon entitled “Alive”.

April 16, 2020 – As part of the “Seeking Abundance” online video series, fitness instructor Linda Draper offers advice on “the importance of exercise during these times” and “how to maintain an exercise routine.”

April 18 and April 28, 2020 – The “Journey” series on LCPC membership is offered online using the “Zoom” video conferencing application.

April 19, 2020 – The online sermon series on “Viral Faith” based on Romans 8 continues with a sermon entitled “Adopted”.

April 19, 2020 – Online meetings with “Prayer Partners” are offered on Sundays between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m.

April 23, 2020 - It is announced that \$7,955 was received in the Easter offering. The proceeds of the offering will go to the “Outreach Foundation”, and will be used to respond to the “COVID-19 crisis world-wide”.

April 23, 2020 – “Campus Clean Up” work possibilities incorporating “social distancing” and “staggered shifts” are offered.

April 23, 2020 – As part of the “Seeking Abundance” online video series, “Exalt Prayer Team” “Captain” Maria Novak and Pastor Sprinkle discuss prayer.

April 26, 2020 - The online sermon series on "Viral Faith" based on Romans 8 continues with a sermon entitled "Why?"

**NJ** – April 27, 2020 – "Lawn signs" reading "Thank You Health Care Heroes" are appearing around Basking Ridge and the surrounding area. Designed and sold by several local women, a portion of the proceeds from their sale (\$6 each) is to be used to purchase meals for workers in local hospitals, emergency response personnel, etc.

**NJ** – May 1, 2020 – A report states that there are 121,190 reported cases of COVID-19 in NJ and 7,538 deaths in NJ attributable to COVID-19.

May 3, 2020 – The online sermon series on "Viral Faith" based on Romans 8 continues, with "a message about suffering and God's ability to restore". Viewers are encouraged to celebrate communion at home as they watch. "Faith Café" begins a new online series entitled "Good Spirit" using the "Zoom" video conferencing application.

May 7, 2020 – To celebrate the "National Day of Prayer", the "Exalt Prayer Team" leads an "online prayer meeting" between 12 and 1 p.m. using the "Zoom" video conferencing application.

May 7, 2020 – As part of the "Seeking Abundance" online video series, licensed professional counsellor Emi Sprinkle "talks about loss and explains the process of grief".

May 10, 2020 – The online sermon series on "Viral Faith" based on Romans 8 continues, as LCPC member Ginny Mayer Brown "shares her experience of faith while conquering cancer."

May 14, 2020 – As "traditional" graduation exercises at local schools have been cancelled, a program entitled "Adopt a High School Senior" is started at LCPC. "Parades" in automobiles with "signs, beeping horns and notes of encouragement" are being organized.

May 14, 2020 – As part of the "Seeking Abundance" online video series, Curt and Janna Hanover speak about how they "are sharing the good news of abundant life in Thailand through 'The Jesus Film.'"

**NJ** - May 15, 2020 - NJ Governor Murphy's website reports 143,908 "lab confirmed cases" of COVID-19 in NJ and 10,138 "lab confirmed deaths". These statistics should be subject to analysis in the future, as it is unclear how many deaths were actually "caused by" the virus, or whether it was a "contributing factor.") Another term used abundantly by news people these days is "hot spot", as in "New Jersey is a 'hot spot' for the pandemic." The media are using the term "second wave" these days – as in "we can anticipate a second wave of the virus in the fall"....

May 17, 2020 – A new online sermons series entitled "Encouragers" starts ("The world needs encouragement right now, doesn't it? How can we live as encouragers when many of us need encouragement, too?"). Commencing today, two online "worship options" ("traditional" and "contemporary") are to be offered. They will incorporate the same sermon and prayers, but different worship music and liturgy.

May 18, 2020 – Session approves a "Plan to Relaunch Live Worship at Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church". In it, a "target date" of "two weeks after permission by state leadership" is set.

May 21, 2020 – As part of the "Seeking Abundance" online video series, Licensed Professional Counselor Glenn Murphy speaks about "the impact of COVID-19 on marriage and family."

May 24, 2020 – The “Encouragers” sermon series continues online.

**NJ** - May 25, 2020 (Memorial Day) – Traditional local Memorial Day activities such as the Basking Ridge / Liberty Corner Memorial Day Parade have been cancelled. The opening of Pleasant Valley Pool in Bernards Twp., which would otherwise have taken place this weekend, has been postponed until July 1 (subject to further postponement or cancellation).

**NJ** - May 28, 2020 – According to the Bernardsville News, as of May 26, 241 “confirmed cases of”, and 41 deaths “attributable to” COVID 19 have been reported in Bernards Township. The vast majority of the deaths have occurred at the Lyons Veterans’ Hospital.

May 28, 2020 – As part of the “Seeking Abundance” online video series, Lindsay Liguori, “a teacher and parent of young children, shares the joys and challenging of parenting, balancing home and work life while staying at home, and offers encouragement for parents and families.”

May 28, 2020 – It is announced that “2020 VBS [Vacation Bible School] Sports Camp” will be cancelled, “[w]ith so many unknowns and the safety and health of our kids and volunteers being of utmost importance.” In its place, a “Summer of Service” program involving home participation in a variety of service projects will be offered.

**NJ** - May 29, 2020 – By Executive Order, NJ Governor Murphy authorizes the opening of places offering “child care services” on June 15. The Children’s Corner does not re-open, however, until the fall.

May 30, 2020 – An “online prayer retreat” featuring Rev. Dr. James Kearny and Rev. Dr. Sprinkle is held.

May 31, 2020 – The “Encouragers” sermon series continues online.

June 4, 2020 – An invitation to “prayer and discussion regarding justice in America” on Sunday, June 7, using the “Zoom” video conferencing application is extended. It is said that participants may “talk about the significance of recent events” and be able to “pray for peace, and justice, and hope.” This is in response to civil unrest that has recently occurred under the pretense of protesting the death of a black man in Minneapolis who was being restrained by police.

June 4, 2020 – The “Seeking Abundance” online video series continues with David Cutler of “Liberty Adult Children of Alcoholics” (“recovering from addiction is a challenge in the best of circumstances, but the COVID crisis creates additional hurdles”).

June 4, 2020 – The availability of Stephen Ministers is advertised (“These are very difficult times and we want you to know that Stephen Ministers are trained and ready to help you....”).

June 4, 2020 – The availability of the “Deacons’ Fund” is advertised (“in these uncertain times...”) and donations to it are encouraged.

**NJ** - June 9, 2020 – By Executive Order, NJ Governor Murphy authorizes the opening of “aquatic recreational facilities”. Our local “Pleasant Valley Pool” will eventually open on July 3 (absent “COVID”-related closure, it would have opened on May 23).

June 11, 2020 – Plans to “relaunch live worship” are announced. “We are looking ahead to the time we can relaunch live worship, groups and events, but we are not going to rush into this.” “As for when, we are aiming for two weeks after the governor gives the green light.”

June 11, 2020 – The “Seeking Abundance” online video series continues with Rev. Sprinkle and Rev. Marcus Brooks talking about “race and the Christian faith.”

June 11, 2020 – The availability of Stephen Ministers is promoted. “These are very difficult times and we want you to know that Stephen Ministers are trained and ready to help you through....” “During the Coronavirus pandemic all caring visits will be done over the phone or through video conferencing options based on your preference.”

June 18, 2020 – A “Bring Your Own Picnic” is scheduled for July 5. “Let’s safely gather outdoors and reconnect as a church family.”

June 18, 2020 – The “Seeking Abundance” online video series continues with a discussion on the “joys and challenges of fatherhood.”

**NJ** - June 18, 2020 – Ridge High School stages a “drive up graduation”. No spectators are allowed. Students are driven one by one to one end of Lee Field, walk to the center to pick up their diplomas, and then are picked up at the other end of Lee Field.

June 21, 2020 – The “Encouragers” online sermon series ends.

June 25, 2020 – Beginning June 25, a “Patriotic Duck Scavenger Hunt” will be held outdoors around the LCPC “campus” (“Find all 22 ducks, complete the mystery message, and win a prize”).

June 25, 2020 – The “Seeking Abundance” online video series continues with a discussion with “mission partners” Linda and Geoff Simpson about their work “empowering and equipping” youth in Kenya “to break the cycle of poverty”.

June 28, 2020 – An online sermon on “Lamentations” is given.

**NJ** - “Pleasant Valley Pool” opens in Bernards Township (see June 9 Executive Order noted above). Face masks are required to worn when checking in, and special “swim lanes” have been established for “lap swimmers”. The “high” diving board and children’s water play area are closed, presumably because of fear of disease transmission through lack of “social distancing”, touching handrails, etc.

July 5, 2020 – The “2020 Vision” online sermon series begins.

July 5, 2020 – A “bring your own picnic” is held on “the green” at 5 p.m. Two baptisms are performed, an address is given by Rev. Sprinkle, and songs are sung.

July 9, 2020 - The “Seeking Abundance” online video series continues with Emily Roos discussing her work with the “Navigators” ministry in Colorado Springs with Rev. Sprinkle.

**NJ** – July 10, 2020 – Church services may once again resume, but subject to the number of attendees not exceeding 100 and 25% of usual room capacity not being exceeded. Face masks must be worn and individuals must remain six feet apart. LCPC has no announced plans to resume services.

July 12, 2020 – The “2020 Vision” online sermon series continues.

**NJ** - July 13, 2020 – The Bernards Township Library re-opens “by appointment only” for browsing and computer use. It is to operate at 25% of capacity, face masks are required and hours of operation are abbreviated.

July 17, 2020 – LCPC “Weekly Update”: “When will this pandemic end? We are all waiting and praying for the end of the Covid-19 pandemic. Your elders have a clear plan to relaunch worship-in-person two weeks after we have a clear “green light” from our state leaders. To some, it feels like we are waiting at a stop light that never seems to change! But we are committed to our members’ safety, and grateful that we can worship God and meet in groups online.”

July 19, 2020 – The “2020 Vision” online sermon series continues.

**NJ** – July 21, 2020 – 15,737 “known and probable fatalities” relating to Covid-19 are reported in NJ; 486 of them are in Somerset County (471 “confirmed” and 15 “probable”). See notation below for November 19 entry regarding the reliability of these reported numbers.

July 24, 2020 – LCPC “Weekly Update” announces the establishment of a “Grieving COVID Support Group” led by Emi Sprinkle - “Are you experiencing grief caused by life changes and losses relating to the pandemic? You are not alone. Learn about the grieving process and emotions you may be experiencing, discover methods for coping in a healthy way, and receive encouragement and support.” The group will meet weekly for twelve weeks.

July 30, 2020 – The LCPC “Weekly Update” – “Listen in as Pastor Barnabas and Pastor Anne have a candid conversation about 2020 Vision and what it means for the future of Liberty Corner Church.”

August 2, 2020 – The “2020 Vision” online sermon series concludes.

**NJ** – August 2, 2020 – “Social distancing” and face mask wearing are promoted in NJ with increasing vigor. At the Bernardsville “Shop Rite” there are markings on the floor at the check-out to remind people from getting close to one another, with a sign reading “Do your part, Stand 10 feet apart”. While in Asbury Park recently, I spotted an amusing sign along on the Boardwalk with a drawing of two people with a jumping dolphin between them and a caption reminding people to stay “a dolphin length apart”....

August 6, 2020 – The LCPC “Weekly Update” – A “Families Ministry” survey is sent out (“Families Ministries understands the importance of keeping families safe while continuing to provide the best Christian educational experience possible. We are developing plans for the fall and would like input from parents of children....”).

August 9, 2020 - “In this week’s [online] sermon, we hear the story of Dorcas and how we need to clothe ourselves in kindness.”

August 13, 2020 – The LCPC “Weekly Update”: “Liberty Corner Church is discerning the wisest approach for fall plans and we need your input.” In addition to the “Families Ministry” survey mentioned above, a “Worship” survey is also linked.

August 16, 2020 – A new online sermon series on Jonah entitled “A Whale of a Tale” begins.

August 23, 2020 – The online sermon series on Jonah continues.

**NJ** – August 24, 2020 – It is announced at a Bernards Twp. Board of Education meeting that “in school instruction” in Bernards Township public schools will not begin until October 1, “at the earliest”. All classes until then will be conducted “virtually”. In a “non-COVID world”, classes would have started on September 3.

August 30, 2020 – The online sermon series on Jonah (“A Whale of a Tale”) continues “with a special message on grace.” In anticipation of the resumption of “in person” worship, today’s “traditional” service is conducted in the sanctuary, with participants Revs. Sprinkle and Havrilla, Chuck Schneider (soloist) and Grace Kang (organist) together in one place.

September 1, 2020 – It is announced that “livestream” and “in person” worship will be conducted, commencing September 13. Due to seating restrictions imposed by the state, reservations are to be made in advance and a link for the making of reservations is provided. “Up to” 35 places will be available for a 9 a.m. “traditional” worship service, and 82 places for a 10:30 a.m. “contemporary” worship service.

**NJ** – September 4, 2020 – “Indoor dining” is allowed to resume in NJ restaurants, subject to maximum capacity (25% of what would have otherwise been allowed) and other restrictions including table spacing and mask-wearing. “Indoor dining” had not been permitted in NJ restaurants since March 16. Movie theaters and gyms are also being allowed to re-open, subject to restrictions.

September 6, 2020 – The final sermon on Jonah is presented. Today’s services are “live streamed” online from the sanctuary and “center court” and are also available in recorded format. A small “congregation” of church officers and others is in attendance.

September 13, 2020 – “In person” worship for “contemporary” (10:30 a.m.) and “traditional” (9:00 a.m.) services is launched, subject to capacity and other restrictions. Advance reservations for attendance are required. A sermon series on “Ascend” is started.

September 20, 2020 – An outdoor “socially distanced” “bring your own” picnic is held on the lawn adjacent to “center court”. The sermon series on “Ascend” continues. Both “in person” and “streamed” worship continue.

**NJ** - September 22 and October 1, 2020 – “In person” instruction begins in Bernards Township public schools (commencement date determined by “grade” and “cohort”).

September 24, 2020 – A Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church “app” is offered. According to its promotion in the “Weekly Update,” it is “available in app stores.”

September 26, 2020 – A “men’s prayer breakfast” is held on the lawn adjacent to “center court”. According to the description contained in its promotion in the “LCPC Weekly Update”, “we’ll adhere to social distancing practices; please bring a mask”.

September 27, 2020 – A “new and improved” Student Lounge is “unveiled” and the high school ministry is kicked off. The sermon series on “Ascend” continues.

September 30, 2020 – “Light in the Darkness,” a 13 week-long online “workshop on depression” begins.

**NJ** – October 2, 2020 - It is announced that President Trump has tested “positive” for COVID 19. Yesterday he was in Bedminster, NJ for a fund-raising event at his golf club. Former NJ Governor Christie, the President’s Press Secretary and others subsequently also test “positive.”

October 4, 2020 – Communion is offered using, for the first time, “single-serve, individually wrapped communion kits”; those worshipping at home may stop by the church office to pick them up (October 4 “Weekly Update”). The sermon series on “Ascend” continues.

October 11, 2020 - A "tailgate" picnic is to be held in the "back parking lot". The October 8 LCPC "Weekly Update" suggests that we "pack a cooler with a picnic lunch and enjoy the beautiful weather and fellowship while being socially distant."

October 24, 2020 – "Fall clean up" – "Please bring a mask" (October 15 "Weekly Update").

October 24, 2020 – "Men's Breakfast" – "We will adhere to social distancing practices, Please wear a mask." (October 15 "Weekly Update").

October 25, 2020 – "Give Love Away" – "We'll be putting together gift bags to reach out and connect with church members who may be feeling disconnected during this time" (October 15 "Weekly Update").

October 27, 2020 – A program entitled "Divorce Care Surviving the Holidays" is to be held. "This has been a tough year, and the holidays are going to present unique challenges too". "For safety, temperature checks will be conducted, masks will be required, and no food or drinks will be permitted." (October 8 "Weekly Update").

November 1, 2020 – A three part sermon series entitled "Tackling Temptation" begins.

November 1, 2020 – "Commitment Sunday" – "We are in the midst of uncertain times; yet, God is faithful" (October 22 "Weekly Update").

November 1, 2020 – "Faith Café" begins a new series: "Thankful, Grateful, Blessed." "In this Thanksgiving season, despite the unusual times we live in, we have much to be thankful for. Join us for this Faith Café series over Zoom" (October 29 "Weekly Update").

November 15, 2020 – The Annual Meeting of the Corporation and the Congregation is held, both "in-person" and "on-line" using the "Zoom" video conferencing application. The By-Laws of the Corporation and the Congregation are amended to allow for virtual meetings.

**NJ** - November 17, 2020 – With Thanksgiving approaching and an increase in COVID cases, NJ Governor Murphy limits "indoor gatherings" to 10 people (subject to various exceptions – religious meetings are not affected – the intended limitations relate to social gatherings), suggesting that Thanksgiving should only be celebrated with "household members" and that "Thanksgiving plans" should be kept "as small as possible."

**NJ** – November 19, 2020 – NJ's Health Department reports on its "COVID Dashboard" that as of yesterday there have been 14,877 "confirmed" and 1,812 "probable" deaths in NJ attributable to COVID-19. In Somerset County there have been 530 "confirmed" and 75 "probable" deaths. Numbers cited in news reports vary wildly – See, for example, the totals reported above for July 21 and how they differ from the numbers cited by the Health Department on November 19. Terms such as "lockdown fatigue", "super-spreader" (i.e. a person or event to whom or which multiple cases of COVID are traced), "science denier" (i.e. someone who is being criticized for not agreeing with some of the varying, and often contradictory bits of "scientific advice" we are being given by various "experts"), "long hauler" (i.e. someone who has lingering symptoms), and "second wave" (i.e. the second surge in COVID cases) are in vogue in the "news".



November 21, 2020 – “LCPC is offering a COVID-19 testing clinic every Saturday from November 19 through December 21” (November 12 “Weekly Update”). The clinic is being offered “[a]s a service to the community and an opportunity for LCPC to share the love of Christ in a tangible way.” (November 19 “Weekly Update”).

November 24, 2020 – Volunteers are sought to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas – “Please bring a mask” (November 5 “Weekly Update”).

November 28, 2020 – A “Men’s Breakfast” is to be held outside (through winter?!) “on the lawn” on the fourth Sunday of the month (November 5 “Weekly Update”).

November 29, 2020 – A four week-long “Faith Café” series entitled “Who Needs Christmas” begins over the “Zoom” video conferencing application. An Advent sermon series called “The Weary World Rejoices” begins.

November 29, 2020 – Seven new “Stephen Ministers” are commissioned (the “Class of 2020”).

December 20, 2020 – A “High School Christmas Party” is to be held (“with masks and social distance, of course” “We’ll discuss plans for the Honduras Relief Drive, exchange white elephant gifts, and have fun.”)(December 17 “Weekly Update”)

December 20 and 27, 2020 – “Young Adult Hikes” are to be held following “traditional worship” (“Masks are to be worn indoors” – December 17 “Weekly Update”)

**NJ** – December 21, 2020 - NJ Governor Murphy announces that vaccination of “front line health care workers” is continuing (the vaccinations started Dec. 15), and that 212,000 doses of the Pfizer and the Moderna vaccines are currently available in NJ. Last week he announced that since March 10 there had been 16,172 “confirmed COVID-19 deaths” in NJ since March 10, with another 1,908 “probably” attributable to COVID-19.

December 24, 2020 – Three options for Christmas Eve worship are offered: “an outdoor Carols and Lessons service”(“Bundle up and gather on the church lawn, surrounded by the light of luminaries” – November 29 “Weekly Update”)(Due to a forecast of rain, this service is moved indoors to Center Court, with a “seating capacity” of 200 “for safety reasons”; “reservations are recommended” - December 22 notification), an “online Christmas Eve service” (“Gather the family at home and celebrate Christmas with a special online service” – November 29 “Weekly Update”), and “Self-Guided worship” in the sanctuary (“Please wear a mask indoors and sit socially distanced from other groups” – November 29 “Weekly Update”).

January 3, 2021 – A new sermon series, “How Firm a Foundation,” begins. Faith Café begins a new series entitled “Seek First”, with classes being conducted using the “Zoom” video conferencing application.

January 7, 2021 – The Student Ministry is attempting to collect 1,000 pairs of “gently used” shoes by the end of January to send to Honduras. “Help us send shoes to families in Honduras! Over 150,000 people in Honduras are homeless after two devastating hurricanes.” (January 7 “Weekly Update”). The collection goal is greatly exceeded.

January 9, 2021 – The LCPC “COVID testing clinic” resumes on Saturdays between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

January 10, 2021 – Joseph Kang is commissioned as Student Ministry Director, with the ceremony being accessible both on-line and in-person at the 10:30 a.m. service. “Meet and Greets” are held on January 10 and January 17 and 18, both in-person and by “Zoom”.

January 14, 2021 – A women’s study entitled “You Are Never Alone” commences, using the “Zoom” video conferencing application. “When life feels depleted, especially during this pandemic, does God care?” (December 29 “Weekly Update”).

January 21, 2021 – The “Re:generation” study group series begins, using the “Zoom” video conferencing application. “Re:generation is a Christ-centered 12 step closed group journey toward personal restoration.” (December 29 “Weekly Update”).

January 31, 2021 – The “Journey” class begins. “Explore what it means to be a covenant partner at Liberty Corner Church.” The series is held over the “Zoom” video conferencing application (January 21 “Weekly Update”).

February 6, 2021 – “Prayer Breakfast” (“Join us on Zoom as Don and Ginny Mayer-Brown speak about “Discerning God’s Will and Growing your Prayer Life”) (January 21 “Weekly Update”).

February 7, 2021 – Young Adult hikes are being held every Sunday after worship. “Masks are required indoors.” (January 28 “Weekly Update”).

February 11, 2021 – An appeal for contributions to “Deacon’s Benevolence Fund” is made (“In 2020, funds supported seven families in critical need due to COVID.”)(February 11 “Weekly Update”).

**NJ** – February 14, 2021 – The New Jersey Department of Health COVID “Data Dashboard” reports that, as of this date, there have been 20,208 “total confirmed deaths” in New Jersey from COVID-19.

February 14, 2021 – A Lenten “Faith Café” series modeled around “surrender,” the “Ascend model’s second spiritual posture” begins, and is offered twice each Sunday using the “Zoom” video conferencing application (February 11 “Weekly Update”).

February 17, 2021 – To mark Ash Wednesday, ashes are distributed in the LCPC parking lot on a “drive up” basis between 12 and 12:30 p.m. A service is offered in the Sanctuary at 7 p.m., which is also available by way of “live stream.” Due to government-imposed capacity restrictions, “reservations” are required (February 11 “Weekly Update”).

February 18, 2021 - A request is made for contributions to the “Deacon Benevolence Fund” (“In 2020, funds supported seven families in critical need due to COVID.”)(February 18 “Weekly Update”).

February 18, 2021 – Links providing on-line access to LCPC’s 2020 Annual Report and Financial Report are provided (February 18, 2020 “Weekly Update”). Both reports contain numerous references to the unusual nature of the past year. Among the matters noted in the financial reports is the receipt of a “Paycheck Protection Program” loan of \$344,400, of which \$156,400 relates to church activities and the balance of \$188,000 relates to operation of the Children’s Corner. It is stated that application has been made to convert the loan to a grant. The “Paycheck Protection Program”, enacted by Congress in 2020, provides for Federally-guaranteed loans to small businesses, including churches, for the purpose of maintaining those business’ cash flow during the “pandemic”.

February 21, 2021 – A Lenten sermon series about listening entitled “Ears to Hear” begins (February 18 “Weekly Update”).

**NJ** - February 22, 2021 – Daily “in school instruction” returns at all six Bernards Township district schools.

**NJ** – February 22, 2021 – Pursuant to a Presidential Proclamation, all flags in NJ and the rest of the US are to be flown at half-staff between this date and sunset on February 26 in memory of what the President states are “more than 500,000 fellow Americans lost to COVID 19.”

February 28, 2021 – Annual Meetings of the Congregation and the Corporation are held at 11:45 a.m. in Center Court, with both “in-person” and “virtual” attendance. See November 15, 2020 authorization for “virtual meetings” referred to above.

March 21, 2021 – “We are increasing the number of in-person worship reservations to meet the new [state imposed] guidelines. Beginning Sunday, March 21, reservations will increase to 100 in the Sanctuary and 150 in Center Court. We will continue to wear masks, maintain safe distances, take temperatures, clean and offer sanitizer.” (March 4 “Weekly Update”).

March 28, 2021 (Palm Sunday) – A recorded video interview about forgiveness conducted by Rev. Sprinkle of Rev. Anthony Thompson of Charleston, SC is presented. Rev. Thompson had been scheduled to appear in person a year ago, but his appearance was canceled due to COVID fears.

April 1, 2021 – “Share in the Lord’s Supper, pray in the garden, and hear conversations by the fireside in this experiential Maundy Thursday service. Small groups will move through three “scenes.” (March 11 “Weekly Update”).

April 2, 2021 (Good Friday – “Self-Guided Prayer and Reflection” in the Sanctuary (“please wear a mask”) and a “Stations of the Cross Tenebrae” (“please register to attend in person”)(March 11 “Weekly Update”).

April 4, 2021 (Easter) – Three worship services are offered, both “in person” and via “livestream” (two in the Sanctuary and one in Center Court). A special “Easter Offering” is collected “to benefit projects of the Outreach Foundation in their efforts to ease the burden of COVID around the world” (March 25 “Weekly Update”).

April 15, 2021 – Wednesday night basketball (“3 on 3”) is being offered on Wednesday nights by the Student Ministry in Center Court (April 15 “Weekly Update”).

April 30, 2021 – Contemporary Worship Director Bill Stauffer leaves, as his full time position is switched to part-time (April 22 “Weekly Update”)

May 2, 2021- “Try a Tithe Sunday” is marked (“we are encouraging you to try tithing for a week”)(April 22 “Weekly Update”)

**NJ** - May 3, 2021 – Ridge High School implements “full day in-school instruction” for the first time since March 13, 2020, when Bernards Township schools were shut down for the rest of the school year. The current school year started in the fall with two options being offered: a “hybrid” of in-school instruction and “virtual” instruction at home. Since this past February, the “hybrid option” has been offered four half-days per week.

May 4, 2021 – A new group called “Super Soul Sensations (S3)” for “singles and couples in their 40s and 50s” is “kicked off.” The group is to meet weekly by “Zoom”, as well is in person (April 29 “Weekly Update”)

May 9, 2021 – The “Called” sermon series continues

May 14, 2021 – An e mail is sent out under the heading “Covid Protocols.” It notes that the “CDC” (Center for Disease Control) has announced new standards for regarding mask wearing by vaccinated people, that NJ will be announcing new capacity control regulations next week, and that “the Session will be reviewing and evaluating our COVID protocols.” The e mail states that “[i]n the meantime we ask you to continue to wear masks and follow the COVID protocols we have been using.”

**NJ** – May 19, 2021 – Percentage-based capacity limits are lifted for indoor and outdoor business and activities, as well as for houses of worship

May 22, 2021 – “Join us via Zoom for the Annual Prayer Retreat sponsored by the Exalt Prayer Ministry. This year’s theme is “Ascend, Surrender, Exalt...” Rev. Tim Rogers-Martin and Rev. Sprinkle are featured speakers (May 6 “Weekly Update”)

May 27, 2021 – It is announced in the May 27 “Weekly Update” that masks will no longer be required for worship (although those who have not been vaccinated are encouraged to wear them), reservations will no longer be required for worship, that “temperature checks” will no longer take place at the door, that in “traditional” worship people must no longer be seated in alternating pews (although a section in the front left of the sanctuary is reserved for those who wish to continue to “social distance”), that in “contemporary” worship seating in alternating rows will continue, that all Sunday school teachers have been vaccinated, that Sunday school classes will be conducted outdoors and mask-free, weather permitting, and indoors, with masks if the weather is bad.

**NJ** – June 4, 2021 – Indoor gathering limits are terminated.

August 5, 2021 – “For everyone’s safety, we continue to monitor COVID activity in our area. We have recently crossed into high transmission, and the CDC recommends everyone wear a mask in indoor settings, regardless of vaccination status. While this is a recommendation only, we consider you to wear a mask as an act of care for others.” (August 5 “Weekly Update”). The apparently more readily transmissible “Delta” variant of COVID is causing problems.

**NJ** – August 9, 2021 – As of August 9, masks are required in the indoor premises of all school buildings. For the start of the upcoming academic year, masks will be required to be worn by all students and staff, regardless of vaccination status.

September 26, 2021 – “Given the recent rise in COVID infections, we will not be holding a lunch on September 26. Instead we will be holding special interactive worship services that day for all ages.” (September 21 “Weekly Update”). A church-wide “homecoming” lunch had previously been planned.

October 14, 2021 – The following variation of the August 5 advisory appears: “For everyone’s safety, we continue to monitor COVID activity in our area. Our county currently has high transmission, and the CDC recommends everyone wear a mask in public indoor settings, regardless of vaccination status. While this is only a recommendation, we encourage you to consider wearing a mask as an act of care for others” (October 14 “Weekly Update”)[Note: Virtually no one seems to be wearing a “mask” at LCPC services, in

spite of advisories such as this - - "COVID rules" fatigue and growing skepticism about government and other mandates?]

**NJ** - December 1, 2021 – As a new contagious "variant" of COVID appears ("omicron"), "booster" vaccinations for adults and vaccinations for children as young as five years old are strongly urged by our NJ politicians and the Biden administration. A new word appears in the vocabulary of news media: "boosted", as in "people should be boosted". New mandates concerning masking and vaccination are pushed by various politicians, and the "mainstream media" becomes consumed with spreading warnings about impending problems. A new term being used by the media is "breakthrough cases," meaning cases of infection in fully-vaccinated people.

December 16, 2021 "Weekly Update" re: Christmas Eve services: "We care about you! We realize that everyone has a different level of comfort or caution concerning COVID-19. Liberty Corner Church seeks to welcome everyone safely, as we worship God together. Our county currently has high transmission, and the CDC [the US government's "Center for Disease Control"] recommends everyone wear a mask in public indoor settings, regardless of vaccination status. We are encouraging everyone to mask for the Christmas Eve services as a way to care for each other, as families travel and gather to be together. We will have some masks available onsite."

January 6, 2022 "Weekly Update" – "In this time of increased covid cases, we strongly encourage worshippers to wear masks for everyone's health and safety. We will have some masks available onsite. As a reminder, if you or anyone in your family has symptoms of covid-19, please stay home, monitor symptoms and take care of your health." Re: "Liberty Corner Kids" – "Family Ministries is doing their best to ensure the health and safety of your children by holding class outdoors, weather permitting, and masking indoors."

February 16, 2022 "Weekly Update" – "As we read about declining covid cases, we appreciate that those in our faith community may opt to continue to wear face masks. We ask that you respect individual decisions regarding mask wearing. We will continue to have some masks available onsite. If you or anyone in your family has symptoms of covid-19, please stay home, monitor symptoms, and take care of your health."

**NJ** – March 4, 2022 – On the second anniversary of New Jersey's first recorded case of COVID-19, Governor Murphy held his final COVID-19 press briefing. The Governor will no longer plans to host in-person COVID-19 updates.