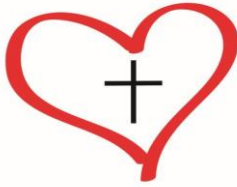


God cares about you



and so do we

First United Methodist Church

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November 15, 2023

Dear Members and Friends of First United Methodist Church of West Allis,

The Church Council has approved a change to our worship schedule to go to **one service on Sundays at 10:30 am**. This works well with scheduling youth, children, and adult education classes. The change is effective **January 7, 2024**.

The Council was very aware of compelling arguments to keep our current schedule as well as compelling arguments for changing to one Sunday service. We don't want to make worship inaccessible to any members by reducing the schedule. We also are aware that we have a shortage of volunteers to serve at two Sunday services, and the Sanctuary is not as full as we would like it to be. We care very much for both points of view. It is our hope that we will be able to add more services again in the near future. Our focus needs to be on fantastic worship service, praising God, and meeting the needs of all our Church family.

The Study Team had a great framework developed by SPRC earlier this year; that document is attached. The theological framework was particularly compelling and said: Christian worship for local churches is a lifestyle, not a moment in time. People gather as a Faith Community, dedicating their lives to honor God and to serve God and people. True worship is constant, inner praise to the God of the Scripture, expressed in prayer, in song, in service, in giving, in sacraments, and in living. In light of John 14:15, the Words of Jesus, worship, and service go hand in hand.

This date works well in not affecting current Advent activities, and it works well with scheduling music; it should work well with our education classes too. Adult education classes will start at 9:00 am, and children's and youth's classes will not be adjusted very much from the current schedule. Most parents reported that they did not want it to be scheduled too early.

We spent a great deal of time evaluating the survey results (which had great participation), and working with the various teams to determine the best single service start time, to minimize any disruptions that would affect these important ministries. Our work teams and listening sessions met numerous times over the past 5 months before making the proposal to the Church Council. The survey results are attached to this communication.

Again, among other things we wanted to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of all the congregation, and we do care about early morning worshipers. Unlike the Ten Commandments, this is not written in stone. We will, of course, make adjustments as circumstances and needs change.

The new schedule will continue into the summer months when we are used to having one service on Sundays. Please mark your calendars:

One service on Sundays at 10:30 am

Effective: January 7, 2024

(continued on the next page)

Please contact David Affeldt, Tom Bolton, Jenny Harper, or Joe Pitterle if you have questions or suggestions.

Praying for a productive and spiritual worship schedule,

Tom Bolton, Lay Leader

David Affeldt, Church Council Chair

Jennifer Harper, SPRC Chair

July 10, 2023

West Allis: First United Methodist Church

A proposal by SPRC to be considered by the Church Council for transitioning from two Sunday worship services (8:00 and 11:00 am fall, winter, and spring) and one service (10:00 am summer) to one worship service all year, beginning Gathering Sunday, September 2023, plus a supplemental worship opportunity (to be developed).

Theological Framework of Corporate WORSHIP

Christian worship for local churches is a lifestyle, not a moment in time. People gather as a Faith Community, dedicating their lives to honor God and to serve God and people. True worship is constant, inner praise to the God of the Scripture, expressed in prayer, in song, in service, in giving, in sacraments, and in living. In light of John 14:15, the Words of Jesus, worship, and service go hand in hand.

Missional reasons to consider one service

- Energize Community and Togetherness. After a couple of years of setback by the effects of COVID - 19, the church has prayerfully and intentionally developed a 'game plan' or a 'blueprint' towards HGV that promises a 'Future with Hope' that seeks building a Community. Moving to one service does not affect that plan. It is our hope that having worshippers together at the same time on a consistent basis is welcoming and encouraging to visitors while energizing our regular in-person worshippers.
- Supplemental Worship/Alternatives to be Considered. While considering one main worship service on Sundays (including supplemental service), there are alternatives that could be considered to supplement the one service. The supplement could be a short chapel service, "Lectio Divina" or reflective and contemplative worship services. Alternatives could be discussed with the worship committee and staff and approved by Church Council.
- Ongoing Discussion for Years. Active church members have been in conversation around this subject matter for years, with specific requests to the pastor and church leaders. It's time to turn their conversation and request to decisive action with alternative plans if and when it is approved with consensus.
- Change Isn't All Bad or Permanent. We continue to focus on our relationship with God, characterized by love, joy, peace, praise, service, and worship. While honoring individual preferences, multiple factors of the church's life and mission should be taken into consideration.
- Pastor and Staff. The Pastor and staff who provide leadership to and lead worship services have been consulted and are open to considering a change.
- Attendance. Worship attendance in person has been on a downswing since post COVID 19 whereas the total worship attendance including online viewers has been encouraging. Despite preferring to attend in person, convenience drives people to embrace hybrid (FUMCWA's choice) as the preferred option. As per the extensive study, 50% of highly religious adults go online to grow their faith using church apps, social and online opportunities.

By consensus, SPRC recommends that one worship service be considered with further details and logistics worked out by the Church Council in consultation with the Pastor, Staff, and Christian Education leaders.