



Open Hearts • Open Minds • Opening Lives to God

May 26, 2020

Dear Valley families,

Our prayers, thoughts and actions have been constantly flowing toward you these past several weeks. We share with you the daily joys, frustrations, and questions that this pandemic has brought to us. And we feel the fatigue of constantly resetting expectations, forced on us by work, school and childcare restrictions, all in the name of health and safety.

As we have discussed summer programming given our new reality, we have made the difficult decision—in consultation with elders, staff and lay leaders, and many of you—to cancel both our Vacation Bible Camp (VBC) and youth mission trip events. The health and safety of our children and families, along with those of our host community in Red Wing and the volunteers who would assist with VBC, are top of mind in this decision. Further, based on conversations with many of you, it is likely that even if we did move forward with VBC and mission trip, participation would be very low.

This loss is significant, and we are sad to come to this decision as yet another difficult one stacked on the many we've experienced these past months.

While this means not doing things the same way we have in the past, it does invite us to reimagine our formation and mission experiences, in ways that will form our faith and serve our community. As we reimagine what mission work, faith formation and fellowship might look like for our children, youth and families, we ask you to be in touch with us. What have you done as a family that has been meaningful? What has been less helpful? What dreams or concerns or wonderings do you have in this time that you think our programming could explore?

In the coming weeks, we look forward to offering ways for us to connect that keep us healthy and present to our own needs and those of our neighbors. As always, we welcome your thoughts, concerns, and prayers for discernment and health. And we lean on the Holy Spirit, who guides us even in these strange moments, even in the confusion and frustration, to paths yet untrodden, to places yet unknown.

In Love and Gratitude,

Sheila Sheldon, Educational Ministries Director

Phillip Romine, Youth Director