



A New Reality

Week 24 June 13- 19

In early 2020 a global pandemic emerged that affected everyone in some manner. We began a lockdown that was initially to be for about two weeks. Six months later the lockdown (somewhat relaxed) were still ongoing. Many businesses are still closed or are operating at reduced levels and face masks are still required. The phrase “a new reality” is often repeated that essentially says that some of the measures that are currently in force will not be relaxed for the foreseeable future.

One of the realities of the moment is that we have been unable to worship as a community of Christian believers since mid-March of 2020. We have been using Zoom for our services. About a month ago, we were allowed to come back to church, but with significant restrictions...no singing, no socializing, no Communion.

I have come to each of the recent in-person services. For the first one I was a bit surprised by who attended as well as who did not. I am in a small country church that prior to the pandemic had a weekly attendance at our one service of between 75 and 100 congregants, ranging in age from infant to mid-90’s. We had 11 attendees at the first in-person service, and I was the youngest at 66. So, in our church, the most at-risk age group was the only group represented. This pattern has largely repeated over the last few weeks though we have seen a few in lower age brackets.

The restrictions and lockdowns (and masks) will disappear over time, and I hope and pray our church will return to a more normal experience soon. I will never accept our current environment as my new reality. What is my new reality is the knowledge of how much we need Christian community, especially as we age and have fewer opportunities to interact with one another. It felt so good to be at church with others, even if we were still just watching streaming video and our opportunity for conversation was limited.

I suppose I had become complacent prior to the pandemic but have since come to my new reality of just how much I need my Christian community.

John Mann

Scripture:

Matthew 18:20

Proverbs 27:17

Romans 12:5

Romans 1:11-12

Hebrews 10:24-25

1 Corinthians 12:27

Galatians 6:2