To the People of Bethlehem Stonepile UMC and Springvale UMC:

As was announced during our “online” worship this past Sunday we will be worshiping together and in person this coming Sunday, May 31st. That worship will be held outdoors so social distancing will be easily possible for us. But that social distancing will require cooperation from all who attend. It will be difficult to not run to each other in greeting and offer handshakes or hugs, but, for now, we can’t do that. But we can still be together and rejoice in each other’s presence.

I want to share the words of a hymn that seems fitting, “And Are We Yet Alive”. This hymn was written by Charles Wesley and the opening lines recall the story of Jacob’s joyful reunion with Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 46: 30). Charles Wesley applies this to the joy and hope that Christians share, even in the face of their own fears and struggles. Follow these few verses of that hymn:

And are we yet alive, and see each other’s face?

Glory, and thanks to Jesus give for his almighty grace.

What troubles have we see, what mighty conflicts past,

Fightings without, and fears within, since we assembled last.

Yet out of all the Lord hath brought us by his love;

And still he doth his help afford, and hides our life above.

Let us take up the cross till we the crown obtain,

And gladly reckon all things loss so we may Jesus gain.

It will be so good to be together as the body of Christ known as Bethlehem Stonepile and Springvale Churches – to see each other’s face again. Do remember that we will still be livestreaming the services so if you are not comfortable attending in person you can still be a part of the worship. And remember to bring a lawn chair. Looking forward to seeing you on Sunday.

 Pastor Bud