To the People of Bethlehem Stonepile UMC and Springvale UMC:

In this weekly Wednesday greeting I want to remind you of our worship plans and I want to make a request of you.

First, a bit of explanation about our worship plans. We human beings are very complex entities. Obviously, we have a physical side – we need air to breathe, food to eat, shelter to protect us from sometimes harsh elements. Those physical needs always exist as long as there is life in our bodies. Certainly in the last months those physical needs have been obvious as we strive to protect ourselves and our loved ones from this Covid 19 pandemic. Most of us have done what we can to help “flatten the curve” as it has been phrased.

But understand this – we also have a spiritual side that needs to be nurtured. That has been difficult in these days. I never thought I would have to share my sermons via the internet and livestreaming. I am so grateful for the folks among you who understand this “tech” stuff far better than I. We at least have had the opportunity as church families to worship together even though we are gathered in different places. But for our spiritual well-being we need to be together. We cannot just care for our physical bodies; we need to care for our spirits as well. That is why we are anxious to be together; to see one another’s faces; to greet each other even if it has to be at the proper “social distance” for our time. That is why we are offering the outdoor worship services on the 31st of May. It will give each church an opportunity to see one another – to at least be together on our church property. But remember this: if you are at all uncomfortable coming together then please just stay at home. We will still be livestreaming the service so you can continue to participate in that way.

I will not repeat all that was on the facebook page about this service and the schedule for the weeks to come. Each week there will be announcements on the Charge website and on the facebook pages about the plans for the next week. Just know that we are all anxious to be together in as safe an environment as possible.

Now for my request. As it has been announced your new pastor beginning in July is Pastor Bill Jones. His wife’s name is Pam and they have two children, Nathan and Joelle. To begin to make them feel welcome I would suggest that you send them a letter or a card to let them know they will be welcome at Bethlehem Stonepile and Springvale. Maybe you could include a little bit about your family so they can begin to know you even before they arrive. The Jones Family has one of the pictorial directories for the charge so they could begin to put faces with names as you write to them. The address is 1315 Rayville Road, Parkton, MD. 21120. Make them feel welcome!

So now may God continue to guide you, comfort you, and as I said last Sunday – challenge you in these times.

Pastor Bud