
June 10, 2020

Dear friends in Christ,

When we began 2020, no one could have imagined that we would be where we are today. In three months, we have all transformed and changed how we live our daily lives and how we gather together in our attempts to navigate a global pandemic in our community. While this season in our lives has been difficult, there have also been life-giving signs of grace and hope. No matter what happens, we know and rest on the good news that God is present and active, calling us to proclaim grace to our community.

We all long for the day when we can safely gather again for worship and ministry. At the same, we seek to be responsible with the ways we gather for the sake of the most vulnerable in our community. We faithfully weigh our options, trusting God's guidance and the wisdom of the community.

Our Congregation Council and staff are working on a plan to reopen the church building for in person worship in the coming months. As Covid19 restrictions ease, we are carefully considering what this "reopening" will look like. Council is staying abreast of up-to date information from various sources including government guidance, medical professionals, and other public institutions that gather people together. We seek to balance the desire to be together as the body of Christ and with careful safety measures. We also need your input to assist in this planning.

First, be assured that live Facebook worship and call-in worship will continue. This has been a blessing especially to our home-bound members who can now join us in worship. We are purchasing equipment to support this ministry as a permanent part of our life as a congregation. As restrictions ease, we also recognize that each person or family will make decisions about their willingness and ability to gather in group settings. Our goal is to make sure that our entire congregation can worship with us whether they are able to be with us in person quickly or will wait until a future point to rejoin in-person worship.

Currently, we do not have a set timeline for reopening. Council came to consensus that we will not gather for in-person meetings at least until the health official guidance is for groups of 50 or more. Once we reach that threshold, we will activate plans to safely gather with our best interpretation of current recommendations. Council is already planning for the procedures and supplies that will be needed.

We expect to begin in-person worship services with one Sunday worship service each week at 9:30 a.m. which is our regular summer worship schedule. As guidelines ease, we will increase number permitted and adjust procedures. Worship be different than when we last gathered and we will continue to adjust our procedures for as long as it takes.

At the current time, Council imagines that the following restrictions would be followed for the start of in-person worship:

- Attendees will enter through one entrance at the "glass house." The bank of doors by the Fellowship Hall and the alley door on the Fellowship Hall side of the church are reserved for Child Care Center use only.

- All are asked to sanitize hands with hand-sanitizer upon entering. Masks must be worn at all times. Trinity will provide disposable masks for all attending.
- A health questionnaire or temperature check will be administered at the door with a no-touch thermometer. Only people with a temperature under 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit will be admitted.
- Seating will be at the direction of ushers maintaining social distance and alternating pews. Family groups may sit together.
- There is likely to be no singing or group responses. Bulletins will be handed out. Hymnals, pew Bibles and pencils will be removed from the pew racks.
- Holy Communion will be online rather than within the in-person worship gathering at this time. Receiving Holy Communion within in-person gatherings will be a "next step" as soon as mask procedures are loosened.
- Offerings will be accepted in a no-touch manner in the narthex.
- Volunteers (ushers, greeters, counters, etc.) will be very limited and trained in new procedures.
- Bathrooms will be available but attendees are asked to try to avoid using the bathrooms at church because they cannot be cleaned between each use.
- The balcony, nursery and church office will be closed.
- Attendees are asked to exit as directed and avoid lingering outside in groups.
- We request that worshipers do not come to the church if they are sick, have been exposed to the virus, are awaiting Covid19 test results or are immunocompromised.

As we anticipate these changes in our worship life, we would like to know your plans for joining in-person worship again. **Please return the enclosed pre-stamped survey postcard by Friday, June 19.**

Your input is vital so that our Congregational Council can plan for the number of people ready to return to in-person worship. If you do NOT return the postcard, we assume that you are choosing not to attend in-person worship at this time. If the number of people who wish to return immediately to in-person worship is larger than the restricted number, we plan to institute a "lottery" system to allow all an equal opportunity to attend. Please keep in mind that these procedures and plans are a tentative first step plan. Guidelines and restrictions are changing frequently. As conditions change our planning will shift. We realize we need to start getting ready now.

Thank you in advance for quickly filling out and returning the enclosed worship survey by June 19. We value your input as a member of the body of Christ and we yearn to see you soon.

Yours in Christ,
 The Rev. Dr. Jennifer L. Phelps, Pastor
 Kathy Guelzow, Church Council President