

May 14, 2020

Dear Fellow Redeemed of SBL:

We pray this letter greets you with all of our Savior's love! We have been praying for you, your health and safety during these unprecedented days. Our Board of Elders met this past Tuesday night to talk through the schedule and issues of resuming worship services in the church sanctuary. With this letter we want to update you on this and how we will be taking extra precautions into practice. Please know these plans are subject to change.

First, this coming Sunday – May 17 – we will continue with our “Drive-In” worship services at 8:00 and 10:30 am. The online video worship service will also be uploaded to the SBL YouTube Channel by 7:00 am on Sunday.

On Sunday, May 24 we will resume our worship services in the sanctuary with a number of precautions being taken. We are following the guidelines as encouraged by the Center for Disease Control, the White House Coronavirus Task Force, and directives from Governor Holcomb. Governor Holcomb, in Executive Order 20-26[14.b] has exempted religious services from limits on social gatherings. Social distancing and other sanitation measures continue to apply. Governor Holcomb has encouraged those aged 65 and older to worship at home or via the “Drive-In” church service option. Here are some of the particular details about worship services beginning May 24:

- ✦ We will maintain six feet of distancing between individuals and/or family units (“family unit” is defined as those living under the same roof).
- ✦ Wash hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds as frequently as possible or use hand sanitizer (available as you enter/exit the building and before receiving the Lord's Supper). Pastors and Elders will use hand sanitizer immediately before celebration and distribution of the Lord's Supper.
- ✦ Cover coughs or sneezes into the sleeve or elbow (not hands).
- ✦ Enhanced environmental cleaning of commonly touched surfaces are being utilized (this is done before, between and after each service).
- ✦ Do not shake hands. A verbal sharing of the peace is encouraged, but no physical contact....all while maintaining appropriate social distancing.
- ✦ While we will present the offering at the altar as part of the worship services, we will not be passing the offering plates. Plates will be available before or after the services at the doors.
- ✦ Face masks are available upon entry to the church for those who would like to use them (this is for protection of self and others).

- ✦ Pastors will be utilizing face masks during distribution of the Lord's Supper (this is for those communing in the sanctuary). Elders will also be utilizing face masks during distribution of the Lord's Supper in the parking lot.
- ✦ For celebration of the Lord's Supper we will utilize self-sealed containers of communion wafers and individual cups, grape juice and gluten free options also available. For communion in the church sanctuary we will use continuous line distribution, with appropriate spacing. We will, for the time being, withhold the use of the common cup in celebrating the Lord's Supper.
- ✦ At the end of each worship service the Elders will dismiss the sanctuary by the pews. Please exit the building promptly maintaining safe social distancing.
- ✦ We will continue with the online video worship service each week. Beginning May 24 the online video service will be a recording of one of the Sunday morning services in the sanctuary.
- ✦ We will continue to live broadcast the service in the church sanctuary via the FM transmitter to the parking lot for those who do not feel comfortable coming into the church.
- ✦ Coffee Hour will resume at a later date.
- ✦ Sunday Bible Study, beginning May 24, will be a combination of in person (with seating limited for social distancing purposes) and via the Zoom platform.
- ✦ For the time being we are resuming only the Sunday (8:00 am traditional and 10:30 am contemporary) services. Saturday and Monday services will resume at a yet-to-be determined time (God willing later this summer).

We believe we are providing multiple ways of worshiping our Lord, with appropriate precautions and alternatives, so that as many people as possible can feel they are able to worship our Lord, receive His Word and Sacraments, in a manner in which they feel comfortable. We encourage everyone to understand each person will respond differently to the information presented by local, state and federal authorities. The variety of reactions does not indicate stronger or weaker faith.

We ask you to continue to pray for everyone who is affected by the difficulties of this time. Pray for those who are suffering this disease and those whose loved ones have died from Covid-19. Pray for the medical personnel caring for those infected. Pray for those who have lost their jobs because of the sudden crash of the economy. Pray for our Lord to give wisdom and skill that there might be an end to this disease in the near future. Pray for God's Spirit to encourage His people everywhere to be shining lights of grace, peace and love during these challenging times. Throughout the nearly 2000 year history of the Christian Church, it is at times like these that the unbelieving population has witnessed the mercy, love and kindness of Christians that has made them ask, why are you so calm and loving during this time? May God's Spirit continue to fill us with that same buoyant hope and peace that is only found in Jesus Christ.

One last item, May 24 will also, sadly, be the last Sunday that Matt Johnston is with us before he begins his new position in Lubbock, Texas. Due to all the other restrictions regarding the Coronavirus, we are unable to have an appropriate reception and send off for him and his family. In lieu of that, however, we will recognize him during the May 24 services and have a reception line for him in the parking lot. There will be a basket available in the parking lot to receive cards and well wishes for him and his family.

God's blessings to you in Jesus, the Savior and Redeemer!