

June 8, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I'm happy to announce that on **Saturday, June 20th**, we will start worshipping in our church building again with a modified service schedule.

Our interim worship schedule will be as follows:

Traditional (Main Sanctuary)

Saturdays: 6:00 p.m.

Sundays: 8:00, 9:30, and 11:00 a.m.

Contemporary (Family Life Center)

Sundays: 11:00 a.m.

Please notice 1) the **change in times** of our Sunday traditional services, and 2) that an **extra traditional service** has been added on Sunday mornings. The extra service will alleviate overcrowding as attendance increases while social distancing requirements are maintained through the interim period. The change in worship times will allow teams of volunteers to do a thorough job sanitizing the main sanctuary between services.

We trust that you will exercise good judgment as to whether you personally should be coming back to corporate worship right away. If you have health conditions which render you vulnerable to illness, you should stay safe at home and not expose yourself or anyone else to the risks involved with large public gatherings at this time.

For those of you who cannot return to worship right away, St. John's will continue to offer a weekly online worship service with readings, prayers and a sermon. The online services will be posted at 9:00 a.m. each Sunday on our church website at www.stjohnsgc.org. Also, for those of you who cannot come back right away, we will continue to offer "drive-through" communion every Sunday between 12:15 and 1:00 p.m. This practice will continue until further notice.

Everyone who enters our church building will need to observe some simple guidelines in order to help ensure the health, safety and comfort of all who desire to gather together again as the Body of Christ.

- Everyone, at all times while they are in the church building, should wear a mask that fully and securely covers their mouths and noses. *Please bring your own masks!* If you enter the church building without a mask, or forget to bring one, an usher will kindly offer you one to wear, for the sake of our church family's health.
- Church restrooms will be open for emergencies, but please plan ahead to avoid using them at all.
- Please avoid physical contact with anyone while at church.
- Every other pew in the main sanctuary will be roped off. Please do not sit in pews that are roped off.

- When sitting down in the available pews in the main sanctuary, please be sensitive to how much space is between you and the person/group next to you. There will be no rigid seating arrangement, so each person/group will be responsible to maintain physical distance between themselves and others. Each individual pew is 13 feet long.
- The overflow room will be open with spacing marks on the floor, and chairs will be available to move into the configuration that works best for you.
- The nursery will not be available during the interim period.
- Worship services will be somewhat abbreviated during this interim period. Hymns, for example, will be limited to one or two verses each as long as we ask everyone to wear masks.
- Everything needed for worship will be printed in the bulletins. All hymnals and other pew-type materials will be removed from the worship spaces.
- Communion will not be served at the rail, but in a continuous line, observing spacing, on the main floor of the sanctuary. Your pastors will guide you through communion.
- We will continue using only the pre-packaged communion kits for the time being.
- For several weeks, we will ***not be opening the communion kits*** (eating or drinking) while together in the building. The bread and wine will be blessed during corporate worship as usual, but then we will take the kits home and do the actual eating and drinking there. A leaflet with special instructions on how to finish communion at home will be included in the bulletin each Sunday.
- Offerings can be left in well-marked baskets at the entrances/exits of the worship spaces.
- When walking through the building, please be sensitive about keeping appropriate space between yourself and other individuals/groups.
- Your pastors and anyone officially helping with worship will be wearing masks and gloves throughout the services.
- Teams of volunteers will be sanitizing the worship spaces before and in between worship services.

What about Sunday School and other church groups **apart from worship services**? Our interim gathering policy, after June 21st, will be as follows:

- **Adult Sunday School** will resume at the discretion of each teacher, from 9:30-10:30 a.m. on Sundays, starting on Sunday, June 21st. Please be sensitive to the fact that not all of our regular adult teachers will be able to resume classes right away. Each week, the News Notes will confirm whether your normal adult class will be meeting. Masks and proper spacing will be mandatory for Sunday School classes. Unfortunately, the pastors will not be available for their normal Sunday School classes as long as the modified worship schedule is in place. All teachers will observe strict distancing/sanitizing rules before, during and after classes.
- **Formal Children's Sunday School**, unfortunately, will not meet until further notice. Online activities will continue for the youths. We will alert you when formal Sunday classes will become available for the children and youths.
- **Small church groups** of adults can resume meeting during the week at church, but only after notifying Jan (our church secretary) or one of the pastors of exactly when and where you'll be meeting. Before you begin meeting, at least one person from your group will need to contact either Pastor Seth or Pastor Patti directly in order to review safety and sanitizing guidelines.

- **Other church-member groups, including youths,** will be able to meet after June 21st *only under the direct supervision of a church staff member.*
- **Non-member groups** (such as BSF and 12-step groups) will not be meeting in the church building until further notice.

We are so looking forward to gathering together again! We have been amazingly blessed by God as a congregation through this challenging period. Thank you so much, my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, for your patience, generosity, and continued flexibility as we continue to monitor the situation and resume activities one step at a time. There will be roadblocks and frustration along the way, but I'm confident we will happily adapt to the situation as we move forward together in our discipleship for Jesus. We'll need your love and your cooperation, as always.

“As a prisoner in the Lord, then, I urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling you have received: with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, and with diligence to preserve the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” *Ephesians 4:1-3*

Give me a call any time (614.875.2314) if you have questions or concerns.

In Christ,

Pastor Seth Jersild