

“Where two or three shall gather* in my name...”

**6 feet apart...preferably with masks...and clean hands...and no fever!*

On May 17, the Session voted unanimously to **resume in-person Worship Services on Sunday, May 31, 2020—Pentecost Sunday!** Each Pentecost, we celebrate the miraculous, community-building, life-changing, church-birthing work of the Holy Spirit; how fitting that we should celebrate that story this year by coming back together after our time apart.

We'll meet at our *usual* time (10:45) and our *usual* place (the Sanctuary), but a lot of what we do won't be *usual* at all:

You may need to find a new place to sit. We're blocking off every other row of pews so we can keep our distance from each other. Families who have quarantined together can sit together, but the rest of us will need to sit at one end of an open pew or the other (not in the center). *Don't think of it as “losing” your old place; think of it as an opportunity to see the world (or at least the worship service) from a new perspective. Who knows? Your new place might suit you just fine!*

Some of the things we usually do will have to wait just a little longer. There will be no Sunday School, no choir, no congregational singing, no acolytes, and no nursery. These are *temporary* changes—not permanent ones.

Other things will be done a little differently. Instead of passing the offering plate, those plates will be located at the doors. We'll pass the peace from a distance, too. Instead of having the kids come forward for their time during worship, they will stay in the pew with their families and we will ALL be kids during the “time with children.” *For some of us, that's not too much of a stretch...!*

One thing will be brand-new. We are going to digitally record each service on video. That will not be live-streamed (too technologically challenging for us!) but it will be uploaded for you to watch later that same Sunday. *We miss you, but if you aren't quite ready or able to be back with us in person, that's okay: you can be with us in spirit (and on the internet).*



And some things will not change at all. We will still hear the Word of God...still welcome one another with a smile (even if it's hidden behind a mask)...still pray, still laugh, still hear familiar hymns on the organ and piano...and still pay attention to God's voice as He comforts, convicts, calls, and challenges us.

Questions? There's more information on the back of this sheet. Expect a video sometime next week explaining a little more about the seating arrangements, too. And as always, feel free to reach out to a member of the Session or to your pastor. We'd love to talk—and listen.

“...I am there among them.”

—Jesus (Matthew 18:20)

WE ARE TAKING EXTRA STEPS TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING IS EXTRA-CLEAN.

The building has been *mostly empty* since March 8. That helps. The CDC reports that Covid-19 can only live on surfaces up to 7 days, and we are only in the church *once a week*. That helps, too.

However, we know that *now* is the time for us to step up our cleaning game.

From doorknobs and light switches to pews and bathroom stalls, our cleaning crew will work extra hard to ensure that the building is clean.

Hand sanitizer will be available at each entrance to the church.

WE WILL DO A LITTLE “CROWD CONTROL” AS PEOPLE ENTER AND EXIT THE BUILDING.

Our safety team and ushers will be on-hand to help us get in and out of the building without any traffic jams at the door.

WE WILL STAY UPSTAIRS.

It is simpler right now if we just stay upstairs, on the main floor of the church.

Since we aren't having Sunday School (or coffee and donuts), that shouldn't be too much of an inconvenience.

WE WILL CELEBRATE.

Resuming in-person worship services is something to celebrate. Normally, “celebration” = “cake” (or maybe even a meal). That's not a great idea right now, so we've opted for Plan B: **a free T-Shirt!** If you'd like to wear yours on May 31, those shirts should be available for pick-up at the church office on Friday, May 29—or you can get yours when you come to church on Sunday, May 31.

THINGS MIGHT CHANGE.

The last few months have taught us many things, including an important life lesson about *not counting your chickens before they hatch* (see James 4:13-15, Proverbs 27:1, Ecclesiastes 6:12). None of us know how this pandemic will play out. The Session will continue to monitor local health conditions, guidelines, and best-practices. We will make changes as needed—and we will keep you informed.

Blessed are the flexible, our church sign once declared, *for they shall not be bent out of shape.*

WE TRUST YOU.

Only you can decide if you are ready to return to an in-person worship service. If you are part of a vulnerable population, we encourage you to stay home a little longer. If anyone in your household is feeling sick, we really *need* you to stay home. We encourage everyone to wear a mask. *We know you're smiling behind that mask; we can see it in your eyes!*

WE TRUST GOD.

There are lots of things we don't know. There are lots of people and situations we may struggle to trust (or believe in) right now. But **God is still God:** still loving and gracious; still holy and omnipotent; still listening to and answering prayer; still working (and putting us to work) so that His Kingdom will flourish here on earth as it is in heaven.

Knowing all of THAT doesn't make Covid-19 disappear, but it sure does help us get through this!