

## An Update from the Pastors (4 Oct 2020)

Dear friends in Christ,

As we continue to be the church dispersed during this pandemic we also continue to be amazed and feel very blessed by the way our congregation has thrived under these circumstances! We worship, we study, we socialize, and we even have choir rehearsal and theatre programs, all online. It's amazing how we can adapt when the need arises. And we now have worship participants around the country and on the other side of the world!

We want you to know that church leaders continue to watch the COVID numbers in Bexar County and we wait for the suggested "less than 5% positivity rating." Hopefully, if we all continue to wear our masks in public, keep distanced, and wash our hands, we can achieve that sometime this fall.

In the meantime, staff has been having hours of discussion what in-person worship will be. In preparing for the day when Council agrees that the time has come, whether that be in November 2020 or sometime early in 2021, we have been making plans for what will need to happen for us to be as safe as possible from this highly contagious disease. And we understand that many if not most of us will continue to worship online only well into next year, especially those with health concerns. For this reason, we will continue to stream a separate service designed for our online congregation.

Worshiping in person will be quite different from when we last gathered in early March. It will still be meaningful worship amid familiar (masked) faces, but there will need to be some restrictions observed. There will be a limited capacity in our sanctuary, reservations will be needed, and masks will be required to worship. There will be no social time in the gazebo or church entry. We won't be able to mingle and visit like we are used to as that is prime territory for spread of the virus. We will all enter from the two main doors under the porte cochère to check in. We will all need to come straight in to our seats and at the end of the service we will be ushered straight out.

In-person worship will be a spoken service. Singing and loud talking spread the virus too far and too easily. We will continue to have the small liturgical choir and sing together at our online service, but not at in-person worship. Communion will be shared in individual self-contained elements and we will share the sacrament from our seats. Again, our staff will always strive to make worship as meaningful as possible, but we will need to adapt for a while for this situation.

There are still many more conversations we need to have to determine further details, yet we want you to know we are pondering life as a church during this once in a hundred-year event. We are so thankful for the support and encouragement you have shown our staff and one another during our time apart. God bless you with all you need to continue to be Christ's people in both worship and service as we go forward in the presence of Jesus wherever we may be.

Pr. Dave Schulte

Pr. Kathi Johnson

Pr. Dan Heim