

We have decided to re-open Sunday morning worship!

After meeting weekly and monitoring the pandemic conditions in our area over the last 6 weeks, the elders have decided to re-open our Sunday morning worship services. I know this is something that many of us have been looking forward to – and so has our church staff! Sunday mornings have been very lonely!

However, since this pandemic is far from over, we will be taking some special precautions as we re-gather. Here's the main thing to remember – things will be...*different*. This is just a different time – with different needs and different risks – so, as we come back to church, we will be returning to a very different situation. If we can accept that from the start, it will be easier to deal with all of the changes.

Here are the details...

In-person worship will resume **this Sunday, August 9**. We will have two services each week –

9:00 am – Traditional worship in the Sanctuary (*55+ targeted*)

This service will be primarily for our members who are 55 years old or older (and their families). We hope that by targeting one service for this age group it will limit their exposure to other members who may come in contact with more people during the week. This will also equally divide our members between the two services making it easier to maintain social distancing. Visitors will be allowed in both services.

11:15 am – Contemporary worship in the Fellowship Hall

This service will be open to anyone and will meet in the Fellowship Hall. By holding our two services in two different spaces, this will give us more time to clean. (We won't have to try to get everything cleaned in between the two services.)

Childcare will be provided during both services for children ages 2 and under. We will utilize both of our nursery workers and use multiple nursery rooms if necessary.

Our staff and church leadership are working hard to ensure a safe and clean environment for worship. In our preparations to meet health recommendations, we wanted to provide you with information on the precautions we are taking.

Precautionary Measures

- **If you are feeling ill, please stay home.** Whether you think you have COVID-19 or something else, it's always good to stay home if you might be sick to avoid exposing your fellow church members.
- **If you test positive for COVID-19, please alert the church staff.** That way we can assist public health agencies in their contact tracing efforts.
- **Masks will be required.** Each person attending worship will be required to wear a mask as long as they are inside the building (unless a health condition prohibits it). We recommend that each person bring their own mask, but FCC will provide disposable masks each Sunday outside the worship area.
- **Maintain distance at all times.** One of the reasons we are eager to worship together again is because we have missed seeing each other! But please keep a distance of at least six feet from

everyone (outside your family) at all times. Many people are very concerned about being in a large group, so let's respect each other by keeping our distance.

- **Hand sanitizer will be available.** There will be hand sanitizer stations available just outside your worship area and in the restrooms.
- **We will not be utilizing volunteers.** In an effort to maximize social distancing, we will not be using bulletins, greeters, passing the offering plates or passing out communion. So we will not be using lay volunteers.
- **We will not be sharing Bibles, hymnals, envelopes, etc.** We have removed all the items from the back of the pews to prevent handling by multiple people.
- **Individual communion cups and offering boxes will be available just outside your worship area.** Each worshipper will collect their communion cup on their way into the worship space. Offerings may be placed in the boxes before or after worship. Be careful to only touch the items you need. Each person will throw away their own communion cups on the way out.
- **We have separated the seating areas to allow for social distancing.** We have closed off every other pew in the sanctuary and have arranged groups of chairs in the Fellowship Hall. Please only sit in the open areas provided.
- **Leave room between family groups.** Family groups are welcome and encouraged to sit together in the service, but please sit in the center of your section so you can be as far from others as possible.
- **The service will be dismissed in groups.** At the conclusion of each service, we will dismiss the congregation in sections. This will help alleviate bottlenecks and grouping at the exits. Please be mindful of social distancing when you exit and follow directions from the staff.
- **Worship areas will be cleaned in between each service.** Since we will only have one service in each room each Sunday, this will allow us to disinfect the area and restock supplies before the next service.

If you do not feel comfortable attending in person yet, we want you to feel free to remain at home and worship with us online. **Our Sunday morning services will continue to be livestreamed** on both Facebook and YouTube. If you are having trouble tuning in, please contact a staff member.

On a personal note – one thing we are probably all aware of is that everyone seems to have a different perspective on this situation. Some people are very concerned – worried for themselves or their loved ones, possibly because they are at a higher risk due to other health conditions, etc. And other people are not very concerned at all. And others are somewhere in between. The truth is, if 100 people choose to attend our in-person worship services, we will probably have 100 different perspectives!

For this reason, I think it is important that we establish what our approach will be from the outset. I think we should all act to accommodate the people who are feeling most concerned. Even if we ourselves aren't too worried, we know that others are – so, out of love and respect for them, we should agree to adhere to all of the safety precautions that have been put in place. I realize that wearing masks and keeping our distance, etc., can be very frustrating and even uncomfortable. But it's definitely worth it, not only to keep each other safe, but to maintain our unity as a church. We don't want to put someone else in the difficult position of having to say, "I'm sorry, but you're making me feel unsafe." The best way to avoid that – and to respect one another – is just for all of us to remember and adhere to the policies.

Thank you for being part of First Christian, Plano. Thank you for your patience – and your resilience – and your willingness to inconvenience yourself to make all of us safe. And for your passion for worship!

In Matthew 18:20, Jesus said... “...*where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.*” Over the past several months, I think all of us have come to realize just how true this is! Now we finally have the chance to experience again the power that comes from gathering together in Christ’s name for worship. Let’s make sure we are conscientious about all the little details that make this possible. And then... let’s glorify God together!

♥
-Kyle