

Dear Friends in Christ,

We are entering July, and with the new month we are going to be offering some new things for worship. Let me share what our worship opportunities will look like beginning this weekend:

**\*On Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. we will continue with the outdoor service.** This service has been most successful and well received. Some folks like the earlier time; some prefer staying outside during this time. Given that, we will continue with the 9:00 outdoor service. And of course, this service is weather dependent. In case of bad weather we will have to cancel.

**\*Beginning this Sunday, July 5, we will have an indoor service in our sanctuary. This service will be at 10:15 a.m.** A number of members have asked for an indoor service, and the fact of Texas summers is that outdoors services are getting warmer. So we adding an indoor service! This is a big step for us and we are excited about it. The guidelines for this service are shared below. Please note we will be initially limiting this service to 60 people.

**\*We are going to expand our online worship presence. Beginning this week, there will be two options for on-line worship. First, we will continue with the shorter, more devotional service what we have been offering.** We will continue to post our devotional service on Saturdays and the post will stay available all week. (In fact it will stay available indefinitely.) We will continue to send out the link for this posting and you can also locate it yourself both on our website and Facebook page. Numerus people have said they prefer this more informal format, so we will keep offering this.

**In addition, we are also going to livestream the indoor service.** Some of our members have done a lot of work with cameras and sound equipment in the sanctuary. We now can and will livestream the indoor service. What that means is that you can watch our indoor service on your computer while it happening, and it will stay up for 3 or 4 weeks. Some of our members have asked for the full liturgy to be available on-line, and we are now able to do that.

We will be sending out instructions this week to access the livestreaming.

Wow, that's a lot of worship and a lot of information. Needless to say a lot of work has gone into this, and we are grateful for all who are working on this. But we are excited to keep moving forward with what we can offer for worship. These are challenging times, and new experiences for all of us. We intend to continue to develop our worship life to meet as many needs as possible.

And finally, please let us know your thoughts. All of this is a process; we will keep experimenting and developing. Our hope is to be able to involve as many people in worship as we possibly can. We appreciate your patience and your insights.

May our Lord continue to lead us through these challenging time!

God Bless,  
Pastor Mark

#### **Guidelines for Worshipping Indoors**

1. Please if you are feeling sick or have a fever, stay and home and view the online service.
2. The worship space will be marked off to ensure social distancing in seating. Family units will sit together.
3. We will limit attendance to 60 people. Attendance will be on a first come, first served basis. If there are more than 60 people who come, we will use the narthex area as an overflow.
4. Ushers will wear masks and gloves.

5. Everyone will be asked to wear a mask during the service, except when receiving communion. Pastor Mark will also wear a mask during the service.
6. For communion, people will come forward individually or as a family unit. The ushers will direct you. When you come to the front, Pastor Mark will place the bread and wine on a table at the front for you.
7. We will have one song leader and not use our worship team at these first services. We will watch how things are going with plans to add the worship team as we move forward.
8. At the end of the service the ushers will direct people out of the worship space. Departure will be by rows starting with the back.
9. We will remove chairs from the narthex to minimize the possibility of “social gathering”. People can go into the fellowship hall if they desire.
10. We will share these guidelines via flock notes before the first gathering so people are aware of them. We will also hand out a half page of instructions as people enter for worship.
11. We ask for your patience and prayers and suggestions. This is new territory for all of us and we will together make it work out well and to the glory of our Lord!

### **Thursday Morning Bible Study Resumes**

We are excited to announce that our Thursday morning Bible study is beginning this Thursday at 10:00 in the fellowship hall. Please come and join us!

### **Thank You for Food Donations**

Thank you for the food donations at our outdoor worship service in June. We had a great response and the food is being given to PATH to be shared here in Smith County. Thank you for sharing in this timely and important ministry!

### **Patience and Perseverance**

We live in difficult times and the times seem to be getting more difficult. The news this last week about the rapid spread of the virus in states like Texas has been alarming. I’m reminded that we as Christians are called to be a people of both patience and perseverance. God in His mercy gives us both. Both will be important as we move onward. We will need to draw on patience and perseverance as we continue to battle this virus.

I think a good number of people hoped that we had finished with the virus a month ago when we started to reopen. We are realizing now that this isn’t the case. There is a long ways to go, and I’m sure there will be a good number of ups and downs ahead of us. But in God’s grace we will have the patience and perseverance to continue with this fight. We follow a Lord who has lead and sustained His people through difficult times all through history. He will do that with us also! We look to our Lord to sustain us; He is the one who gives us hope and who strengthens us.

May our Lord lead us onward!