

May 3, 2020

Christ is risen, Alleluia! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

As we bear the burden of this plague, we continue to pray for God's divine intervention to bring about the cessation of this viral infection. However, I am overjoyed to announce that Sunday Worship will return to Bethany on Sunday, May 10, 2020. However, in our transition from sheltering in place to open societal activity and back to pre-coronavirus life, our worship schedule will be abbreviated and unfortunately, other activities will continue to be suspended.

It has been a time since we have gathered in community for Sunday worship and many will want to fellowship; however, as we come together this coming Sunday, please keep the welfare of the "other" in mind. There is still considerable "fear" and uncertainty in many, as the full story of the pandemic is yet to be revealed and the potential of resurgence still looms in the future.

In our effort to gather safely for worship and in consideration of the government's health and sanitation recommendations, the Congregational Council has approved the following procedures in an effort to reduce the potential transmission of pathogens:

- ✘ If one is not feeling well, has a fever, especially with a cough and/or sneezing, please stay home.
- ✘ Because the church building would need to be cleaned/sanitized (stair railings, door handles, pew backs, hymnals, restrooms, etc.; anything that people would touch) after each use there will be only one service at 9:00 AM.
- ✘ At this time, unfortunately, there will not be a "coffee hour" or Sunday school.
- ✘ Also, to reduce the expanse of the building, which will need to be sanitized, some doors will not be open. The front (red) doors of the church and the basement (kitchen) doors will be locked. The back doors ("tower") off the parking lot and the (front glass) door to the education wing will be open. The nursery and Sunday school rooms are CLOSED.
- ✘ Worshipers are asked to enter and exit the sanctuary by way of the east sanctuary door (the door at the front, adjacent to the elevator). Please, when entering and exiting, do not congregate at or near the doorway and maintain "social distancing." If needed to facilitate a smooth dismissal, an usher may direct worshipers to exit by pew. The pastor will not be greeting parishioners at the door.
- ✘ Worship attendees are expected to maintain social distancing in the pews; family members, who reside in the same residence, may sit together.
- ✘ There will not be greeters; therefore worshipers are to pick up a bulletin at the door as they enter the sanctuary.
- ✘ The offering plates will not be passed. There will be a plate(s) located at the entrance door, please drop your offering in the plate(s) as you enter.

- ✘ The wearing of masks, a covering of the nose and mouth, is strongly encouraged; however, no one should be turned away.
- ✘ Please refrain from physical contact at the exchange of the Peace.
- ✘ A limited amount of hand sanitizer will be made available; please, if possible, worshipers are encouraged to bring hand sanitizer for their own use. Worshipers are requested to touch as little as possible and/or wear gloves.
- ✘ When we exhale we expel minute particles or droplets of saliva, this increases when singing. Therefore, to reduce the potent volume in the space, the Liturgy will not be sung; however, not to completely eliminate singing, the singing of three hymns will continue.
- ✘ Divine Worship is not complete without the ministration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. It is the duty of the Church to offer the Eucharist, the reception of the Sacrament is always the option of the worshiper. Therefore, the Sacrament will be offered with some modifications to previous practices.

The distribution will be continuous, as we have done when the bell tables are located across the front of the sanctuary. Please maintain distancing when coming forward. The usher will direct worshipers, one side at a time, to come down the center aisle and return by the side aisle.

The pastor will place a wafer in the palm of your hand. Please do not grasp the wafer from his fingers. In this way, the potential for hand-to-hand contact is reduced.

Pick up a communion cup from the tray. They will be upside down. This will reduce the likelihood of fingers being put into the cups.

There will be two chalices. The first chalice will contain wine. The wine will be clear to pink in color. Wine is preferred under the circumstances due to the “sanitizing” properties of the alcohol in the wine. The second chalice will contain dark red/purple grape juice for those who desire a non-alcoholic alternative.

The used plastic cups are to be placed in the baskets at the side aisle for proper disposal.

In closing, the only certainty we have in this pandemic is that God is ultimately in control and He will see us through it, for God is the only one who can save us. Let us not be deceived by people seeking the praise, honor, and glory that is due God alone. Christ Jesus suffered and died so that we will have life and life abundantly, that is His promise. Moreover, God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is always faithful to His promises, and therefore we have hope in Him. Jesus is alive, CHRIST IS RISEN! ALLELUIA!

In His service,

*Pastor David*

Pastor David