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July 1, 2020

Dear St. Matthew family,

By now you may have heard St. Matthew will be reopening for worship on Sunday, July 12. We praise God for this and look forward to being together again!

First and foremost, we are committed to providing as safe an environment as possible at the church. So if you have any symptoms of COVID-19, or you feel you may have recently been exposed to Covid, please stay home.

If you are in a high-risk group health-wise, or, if you feel uncomfortable coming to church because of concern for your health or the health of others, please stay home and continue to join us via live stream.

What We Should and Should Not Do

Some of the ways we gather, fellowship and worship will remain the same. Some will be different. Some details will need to be worked out as we move forward. Here's where we are currently:

1. Social distancing is a must. Please refrain from hugs, handshakes, or contact with others. There will not be a "greeting line" with the pastors after the services.
2. Masks are recommended while in high traffic areas such as hallways and foyers.
3. Pews in the Sanctuary (and chairs in the Chapel) will be marked indicating where you should sit. Families should sit together, but individuals should maintain a 6-foot distance from others.
4. If you sing during worship, please be mindful of those around you and do not project.
5. Offering plates will not be passed. Instead, special boxes will be available at each exit for tithes and offerings. You may also leave them in the church office, mail them to the church, or give on line through Push Pay.

6. We will not be using bulletins or Connection Cards when we first come back.
7. For now, coffee, donuts, biscuits and gravy will not be available on Sunday mornings. Water fountains have been turned off.
8. Restroom doors will remain open; please observe social distancing when entering and leaving the restrooms.

Worship Services, Sunday School and Other Activities

1. Our Blended worship will be held in the Sanctuary at 9:00 a.m. Our Contemporary worship will be held in the Chapel at 11:00 a.m. Both will continue to be live-streamed and available on Facebook and the church website.
2. Adult Sunday School will be held right after the 9:00 a.m. service **in the Sanctuary**. Teachers will alternate as they have for the past four months, but they will present the lessons in person. This new schedule will continue through September 6 at which time we will re-evaluate. The Sunday school lessons will continue to be live streamed on Facebook and stored on the church website.

When the 9:00 a.m. service concludes, there will be a short break. Sunday School in the sanctuary will begin shortly after the break. Those who do not want to stay are free to leave.

3. On July 12th, there will be no Kid's Ministry, however kids worship packets will be available for children who accompany their parents in worship. **Starting July 19th**, Kid's Worship will begin. Parents can bring their children in the 9:00 Sanctuary or 11:00 Chapel; then children will be dismissed during worship to go to Kid's Town. Parents will pick their children up following the worship service in Kid's Town. (Sunday school for children will begin at a later date.)

Nursery will be available during the worship times starting July 19. If you do not feel comfortable having your children participate in any of these activities, please keep them with you in worship or keep them at home.

4. The Wednesday night Prayer and Praise service led by Pastor Larry Patton will be held in the Chapel at 6:30 p.m. Additionally, the Wednesday night devotional will continue to be available online led by Pastor Bob or Pastor Andy at 6:30 pm.
5. Celebrate Recovery will meet at 6:30 on Friday evenings, but there will be no meal.
6. The Wednesday evening meal will not be available for now.

7. Cornerstone Deaf Church will resume July 5 with their regularly scheduled worship times. Additionally, we will continue to provide a sign language interpreter at our 9:00 a.m. services.

Other Things We Need to Know

1. The office will be open from 9-12 Monday – Friday. On July 13, normal office hours will resume.
2. The Thrift Shop will open on Monday, July 6. Hours will be the same as the office hours for now, 9-12, Monday – Friday. Sales will be from the gym, not the Thrift Shop.
3. *The Upper Room, Our Daily Bread*, and DVDs and CDs of the Sunday services will continue to be available in the outer foyer. Items for the Summer Sack Lunch Program may continue to be left in the outer foyer.
4. The call-in phone line (239-4102) will continue to be available. If you are unable to attend or to watch live stream, please call this number and listen to the Sunday morning services.

Please understand that we are moving in uncharted waters that are new to all of us. The special Task Force and the staff have tried to think through the ramifications of reopening. No doubt some things will need to be adjusted as we go along. Thank you in advance for your patience as we try to work through things together.

Also, thanks for your patience and your prayer and financial support since the lockdown began. In many ways, St. Matthew is stronger because of what we have gone through.

May God bless you and keep you safe as we continue to look to Him for His provision and in the future. Looking forward to seeing you again.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Bob Swickard
Senior Pastor