

May 25, 2020

Dear Members of St. Matthew's,

How long we've been waiting to be able to write this letter to you! After a number of weeks with the sanctuary silent, we're so excited at the prospect of hearing the bells ring, the organ play and, especially, the voices of God's people raised in song. As the Psalmist says, **"Sing to God. Make music to his name. Lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts. His name is the LORD. Celebrate before him."** (Psalm 68:4).

We're happy to announce that we will be gathering for worship on **Sunday, May 31 at 8:00 and 10:30 AM and Monday, June 1 at 7:00 PM.**

While we rejoice at the prospect of being together again soon, we also recognize that the threat of COVID-19 has not fully subsided. Therefore, we urge those who are not yet comfortable attending to stay home. Our plan is to continue posting our worship services online for those not able to attend yet.

Furthermore, you will note a few changes from our normal worship service procedure. Please read the following list carefully and familiarize yourself with each bullet point:

### General Information

- Public services will begin on the weekend of **Sunday, May 31 and Monday, June 1.**
- We will offer our regular service times: **Sunday at 8:00 and 10:30 AM; Monday at 7:00 PM.**
- Please note that our services will be posted on Facebook and YouTube by Sunday afternoon.
- As we continue to monitor the circumstances, more services may be added if needed.
- We will ensure proper distancing and sanitation to the best of our ability.
- A deeper cleaning will be carried out after each weekend.

### General Procedures

- We ask that those with symptoms of COVID-19 or who know they have been in recent contact with someone who has been tested for and diagnosed with COVID-19 refrain from corporate worship.
- Individuals who are considered to have an underlying "high risk" health condition, or who are more comfortable doing so, are encouraged to remain home and worship online.
- Attendees are welcome to wear your own mask.
- Enter, exit and greet one another maintaining physical distance.
- Hand sanitizer will be available around the building. Special care will be given to use disinfectant wipes to wipe down all common surfaces after each service.

## Inside The Sanctuary

- Hymns, liturgy, and psalms will be reprinted in the service folders and projected on the screen. Hymnals and other materials will be removed. Those who are accustomed to following along in Bibles and hymnals are encouraged to bring their own.
- We will use alternating pews for seating during the service. **This will result in enough space for 150 per service.** Families are invited to sit together. Please follow the direction of the ushers.
- Offering plates will not be passed. Your gifts will be gathered in the back of church.

## Holy Communion Procedures

- Those who are setting up the elements for Holy Communion will take appropriate steps in preparing the elements.
- Wafers will be broken and placed in individual cups. Wine will be offered only by individual cup. More instructions about distribution will be given during the service.

## In Person Bible Class and Sunday Bible School

- In person studies are suspended at this time due to personal distancing recommendations. Future updates will be provided.
- Zoom Bible Studies, BIC Classes and Fellowship will continue as they are able to meet.

Finally, we ask those attending worship services this weekend to please be sensitive to our nation's situation. We understand that everyone will be at different comfort levels as long as this pandemic persists. We are confident that the Lord will bless our time together as we strive to show love to one another as befits members of Christ's body, the Church. This is a special opportunity for us to exercise Christian love and encouragement for one another.

We also understand that this is the time of year for seasonal allergies, along with all the respiratory issues, sneezing and coughing that can accompany allergy sufferers. If those symptoms become a problem for you at any time during the worship service, please excuse yourself from the sanctuary. Our ushers will be more than happy to serve you in any way they can.

Though we have had to change some of our normal routine, we are supremely joyful that God's love for us in Christ Jesus remains the same. Again, we declare with the Psalmist: **"I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." (Ps 122:1).**

Pastor Philip Bigelow  
Pastor Steven Hillmer  
Pastor Daniel Schmidt