

May 26, 2020

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!" - Psalm 122:1

Dear CPC Family,

Our last in-person corporate worship service was on March 15th. It has been a long 10 weeks since we last met together in-person. It is the Session's hope that this particular phase in the life of our church will soon be a thing of the past. **We are planning for the return of in-person worship at the church on June 7th 2020.** There are a number of facets to this planned re-gathering for worship which will be spelled out in this letter and later communications. Please take the time to read this (and subsequent communications) carefully. If you have questions about this plan, please do not hesitate to contact Pastor Donny, Pastor Chris, or one of the Elders or Deacons.

NJ Governor Phil Murphy issued [Executive Order 148](#) on May 22nd. This EO expanded the limitations on outdoor gatherings to 25 people. We are planning to re-gather for in-person worship under the guidelines of EO 148. **On June 7th we plan on meeting for worship outdoors on the church property and limiting attendance to 25 people.** Below is an outline of what this will look like.

We are planning on having 2-3 services on Sunday. If we can fit everyone who wishes to come in-person in 2 services, we will do that. If more than 2 services are needed, we can accommodate by holding 3 services. We are willing, as best we can, to accommodate as many services as necessary. Before the pandemic we averaged around 75 people on a Sunday, so we believe 2-3 services will suffice. Keep in mind that the 25 person limitation will include pastors and musicians.

In order to manage this, the elders and deacons will be contacting you to ask if you plan on attending and to assign you a time to come based on your preferences. This assignment will help us maintain the limit on the number of people at each service. If that time doesn't work, then please let that elder or deacon know so that we can find a different slot. Please understand that the number restrictions are quite difficult to manage. Larger families can quickly fill up our services, so moving them around will not be simple. Our hope is that as the situation across the state continues to improve, the numbers allowed for outdoor gatherings will correspondingly increase. But until that happens, we are limited by this restriction. In order to remain under the legal limit of 25 people at one time, it is important that you not come to a different service or simply arrive at church unannounced. By coming to your assigned service it will help CPC remain within the boundaries of the law. Our currently proposed schedule will be:

- **First Service – 9:00am – 10:00am**
- **Second Service – 10:45am – 11:45am**
- **Third Service (if needed) – 12:30pm – 1:30pm**

For the present, the worship service will be shortened to one hour. The 45 minutes in between provides enough time for the prior group to leave the premises before the next group arrives (keeping our total number of people on premises below 25). While we wait for things to continue to open up, we will need folks to resist the urge to linger and fellowship on premises.

If you or anyone in your house is unwell or has a fever; DO NOT come. We are trusting each person to carefully weigh and manage their own risks in deciding whether it would be appropriate to attend in-person.

We will observe all the mandated "social distancing" requirements as stipulated in Gov. Murphy's Executive Orders. In doing so we are demonstrating not only our care for one another but also our love for neighbor and an appropriate submission to the God-ordained civil magistrates. These requirements include not only the limitation on number of attendees, but also maintaining a six foot distance between all people, excluding "immediate family members, caretakers, or household members." It is each family's responsibility to closely monitor and manage all family members'

adherence to these guidelines. Parents or guardians must help their children to keep socially distant. Kids have little understanding of why they must keep distance and less understanding of how far 6' is. We will assist in this by demarcating in some manner (per EO 148) on the lawn or parking lot where you may sit. You may bring a blanket and sit on the ground or a personal lawn chair. We will also have folding chairs available. We will sanitize the church's chairs before and after each use.

The State is recommending that face coverings be worn "at all times where other social distancing measure are difficult to maintain, in accordance with CDC recommendations, except where doing so would inhibit the individual's health or where the individual is under two years of age." As such, **we are recommending that you wear a face covering when leaving from and returning to your car or any other time when you might not be 6' distant from another individual.** Some may choose to wear a mask during the entire service. Others may not make that same choice. Please maintain charity and grace toward one another regarding the wearing of face coverings.

The church building will be open and bathrooms available. But we are asking that if at all possible to refrain from entering the building. This will help with reducing the necessity of sanitizing the interior and violating the indoor restrictions of no more than 10 people gathering.

We will provide printed handouts for the worship bulletins. Bulletins will also be posted on the church's website if you'd rather use a digital copy on your phone or tablet. If you own a hymnal, feel free to bring your own. We will not, however, be supplying them. We will make every effort to limit the number of physical items distributed. These must not be shared by anyone except immediate family or household members.

We will not be taking up an offering during the service. You are welcome to deposit a check in the mail slot at the building or you can continue to mail your gift or give online. Additionally, **we will not be observing the Lord's Supper at this time.** We hope to begin doing this soon, but we feel it is best to re-establish in-person worship first and then look to the appropriate time to observe the sacrament.

As we will be meeting outdoors, we want you to feel the freedom to dress in whatever way you feel is appropriate for Lord's Day worship outside. The pastors will not be wearing robes or jackets with ties. **Dress comfortably.** You might also consider a hat and sunscreen.

In the event of inclement weather, we will make a decision regarding the cancellation of in-person worship as soon as we can. Ideally, that decision will be made the evening before. Notice will be posted on the church's website and sent via email. If you don't have access to the church's website, we ask that you call an elder or deacon.

We also realize that some people are either not able to come in-person or do not feel it is appropriate for them to risk exposure. We understand and support your decision. **We will be live-streaming one of the worship services to our website.** Previously, we recorded the worship services, edited them, and posted to the website. Live-streaming is a different issue, and we do ask that you be patient with us as we work on getting the presentation of our worship where we feel it should be. This technical side of getting worship broadcast can be quite complex. We are committed to having a live-stream and/or recording available for those who are not yet comfortable attending in person.

We will need some folks to help with set-up and take down. Rene Hamilton is going to be organizing the volunteer schedule for this. If you are interested and available to help, please contact him.

We will post a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) email and section to the website next week to address other concerns or questions. Please, ask the elders or deacons if you have any questions.

I am very excited about this return to gathering in-person for worship. We aren't back to normal yet, but we are getting closer. Please be in prayer for this plan and for the continued diminishment of this crisis situation. **I look forward to seeing each of you soon face to face that our joy may be complete (2 Jn 12).**

For the Session,



Pastor Donny