

Renewed Hope

A plan for restarting public worship

"I was glad when they said to me, "let us go to the house of the Lord." Psalm 122:1

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am excited to tell you that according to the guidelines under Phase 3 of the governor's Restore Illinois Plan, we may gather for public worship services and will resume those services on the weekend of June 20th and 21st. Services will be at 5:00 on Saturday and Sunday will be at 8:00 and 10:30. **Please note the time change for the second service on Sunday. We have moved it back to have more time for cleaning between services. This is a permanent change.**

While this is an exciting time and we are all anxious to be with our Christian family once more, we need to exercise caution. We want you to be aware of some of the things that we will be doing to make sure everyone is safe and secure. Here is what you can expect as we resume public worship services:

- All CDC and IDPH safety and cleaning protocols have been put into place including cleaning and sanitization of the sanctuary, entryway and bathrooms before and after every service. All other parts of the church should be avoided to minimize what needs to be cleaned.
- If anyone is feeling ill for any reason, they should not come for worship. If you do not feel comfortable attending public worship services in larger groups at this time, please call Pastor Ryden and other arrangements can be made.
- The occupancy will be limited to 50 worshippers, not including the pastor and worship assistants. Members are encouraged to sign up online for attendance to help us maintain occupancy limits. Please feel free to come, even if you didn't sign up. We will make arrangements if it looks like we might be over 50.
- Attendees will be required to wear masks and maintain social distancing in the parking lot and inside the building.
- All doors will be kept open to avoid touching handles.
- Families and individuals are asked to enter one group at a time and make use of hand sanitizer or wash hands upon entering.
- Please proceed directly into the sanctuary. The worship service will be projected. No paper copies of the service will be made available. Announcement sheets and prayer sheets can be picked up after worship.
- The holy water font will remain empty.
- Individuals and groups may take chairs and go to a place within the sanctuary that allows for a safe distance between them and other worshippers. Lay Ministers will assist with carrying or moving chairs.
- The worship service will not include a sharing of the peace, the passing of the fellowship book, passing the offering plate, singing or other ways of coming into contact with multiple people.

- An offering basket will be placed near the entrance to the sanctuary.
- Holy Communion will be celebrated by family groups/individuals. Each group will come forward as invited. Pastor will distribute the bread, sanitizing hands beforehand. The wine will be in individual cups only. Cups will be placed in the trays leaving one space between cups. The tray will be placed on a stand. The lay minister will stand behind the stand. Both Pastor and Lay minister will wear masks.
- After the worship service, groups will be dismissed from the back center towards the front sides. People should proceed directly to their cars. Fellowship with social distancing may take place in the parking lot.

This has been and continues to be a difficult time for all of us. I am thankful to God that he has watched over us and preserved us in faith up to this day. It is good that we renew our gatherings to receive God's gifts in Christ through his Word and Sacrament and respond with our prayers and praises. We will continue to monitor the situation and take appropriate actions as circumstances warrant. Additional changes may be put into place when we enter into Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan. If you have any questions or concerns about our reopening plan, please call the church office. I look forward to seeing all of you soon, and may the peace of Christ continue to rule in our hearts.

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Bill Ryden