June 3, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

God encourages us in 1 Thessalonians 5 with lots of important and pertinent words for us during these times. I’d like to remind you of just a few of those words: “***Test everything, hold on to what is good, reject every kind of evil***.” (1 Th 5:21,22) After our first weekend of worshiping together, your Worship Committee tested what happened, would like to hold on to the good, and try to add some ideas to possibly make it more comfortable.

**IN PERSON WORSHIP UPDATE:**

We are giving a little “character” to each of our three worship services. The Thursday night service will basically be the same as before using the original “blended” precautionary measures with social distancing, and “mask only” sections. The early Sunday morning service at 8:00 am will be “Special Care” service where we ask all participants to wear masks. Our hope is to create an environment where our brothers and sisters who may desire “stricter” precautions might feel safer. In contrast we will make the late Sunday service at 10:15 am a “looser” service where most participants will not wear masks. Anyone who prefers to wear a mask is welcome at any service but understand that the later Sunday service will have many people not wearing masks. For all three services, we will keep the balcony “mask only” and follow all other suggested social distancing practices.

Below I will “refresh” your memory of our original precautions with a few updates to answer questions that have been raised. We plan to continue to assess and modify these precautions based our congregation’s needs and pandemic changes. (We do not plan to modify our precautions weekly.)

**PRECAUTIONARY GUIDELINES FOR UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES:**

* **Illness:** If you are not feeling well, please stay home and enjoy the service through a DVD or online.
* **Entrances:** We will keep all interior sanctuary doors open. If weather permits, we’ll prop open exterior doors as well.
* **Drinking Fountains:** Worshipers are asked to refrain from using the drinking fountains at this time.
* **Masks:** Masks have been addressed above. (Thursday, 6:30 pm = “blended” with & without masks; Sunday, 8:00 am = “Special Care”—all masks; and Sunday, 10:15 am = “no masks”—you may wear masks, but many will not.) The balcony was lightly used in our first weekend of worship. Wearing a mask creates a challenge for those playing the organ or helping in the A/V booth. Therefore, we are not mandating organists or A/V booth operators to wear masks, but we are asking other worshipers in the balcony to be masked in all three services.
* **Offerings:** Offering plates will not be passed. The plates will remain at the entrances for those who would like to remember the Lord’s work as they arrive or depart. (For those worshiping at home, the usual opportunities to make offerings are still available.)

*Thanks to all those who are supporting the Lord’s work with their prayers and offerings!*

* **Bulletins:** The service will be on the screen. A bulletin announcement page will be in the pews.

We will make hard copies of just the service lessons. Copies will be located in the back of church.

If you would benefit from a hard copy of the power point with the entire service, please contact the church office. We will make a paper copy of the slides and leave it for you with your name on it.

* **Hymnals:** The hymnals have been removed. Hymns with music used in the service will be available in paper copies in the back of the church. You are welcome to bring your own hymnal.
* **Seating:** Please sit with your family and keep at least six feet distance between your group and the next closest family group. We will continue to use every other pew. Signs and ushers will help to inform worshipers which set of pews to use for the service you attend.
* **Handshakes/Hugs:** Please begin with the assumption that others do not desire physical contact.
* **Fellowship:** We are thrilled to be back together and encourage you to safely enjoy each other’s company. Please respect the advice of health officials and each individual’s personal health concerns. We recommend the Commons and outside as larger and safer areas for fellowship.
* **Sanitizing:** Hand sanitizer will be available near the sanctuary entrances and in the Commons.

We are asking the ushers and church cleaners to help sanitize between each service. We have resources available to keep those cleaning safe as they disinfect pews, bathroom doors, fixtures, etc.

* **Ushers:** If the precautions of the service you are scheduled for does fit well with your comfort level, feel free to switch with another usher. Please inform someone else on your team of the change. If you are currently on an ushering team and feel the need to refrain from serving at this time, contact the leader of your team or the church office. Those interested in joining as a new member of an ushering team should contact the office. Thanks to everyone serving in these strange circumstances!

Additional WORSHIP opportunities:

* **Worship Services:** We will post links and videos of the worship services on Sunday morning. Please bear with us, as we continue to update the quality and timeliness of the posted services. Videos will continue to be posted on our YouTube channel and links to services on our Facebook page.
* **DVDs:** DVDs of the worship services will be available each week in the school entryway (Door A). Please stop by to take one or contact us for more information.

My thanks once again to our leaders who are trying to serve the varied needs and opinions of our members. Your feedback is welcome—we are here to serve you. Please continue to contact me or the church office with other spiritual needs. As always, you remain in my prayers.

“***The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you***.” (1 Th 5:28)

Blessings,

Pastor Darin Aden

Pastor Darin D. Aden

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