



May 22, 2020

Dear saints of *Resurrection*,

As delightful as it has been to gather outdoors for worship, your elders are aware that it is not a sustainable plan for the long run. This week, the saturation of the ground and the chance of further rain over the weekend seems to make it imprudent. And as the summer heat comes, worshipping outdoors will become less and less comfortable for us.

Thankfully, the most recent executive order of Governor Cooper makes clear that restrictions on indoor worship for churches have been removed (attached here; see especially section 4). In light of this, your elders are ready to invite you back to worship in the church sanctuary, beginning this Sunday. But please note carefully the following provisions we are making to ensure that our gatherings remain as safe as possible:

1. We will hold two worship services each Sunday, but with provisions made to preserve seating in the sanctuary at the recommended social distancing of 6 feet or more between households. In order to accomplish this, this Sunday (May 24) we are inviting households with last names starting with "A" through "G" to attend the morning service at 9:30 AM; and households with last names starting with "H" through "Z" to attend the evening service at 5:30 PM. In the coming weeks, we plan to alternate our invitations to these two groups between our morning and evening worship services.
2. The morning service will be lead by Pastor Trice and one of the elders, and the evening service will be lead by Pastor Rosser and a second elder. The order of worship will be the same in both services, but the content will differ. We are encouraging those who are unable to participate in person in the morning service to view it from home via live-stream, and the same for the evening service.
3. We continue to encourage all members and households to exercise wise judgment for themselves in the matter of worship attendance, weighing carefully the risks of attending public worship for themselves and others, and to feel at liberty to choose not to attend worship under the circumstances. Additionally, any at-risk members who prefer to attend the first service each Sunday, when presumably the sanctuary is at its cleanest, are welcome to do so.
4. We continue to discourage from attending worship those with any symptoms of sickness, those who have been exposed to anyone with symptoms of sickness, and those with underlying health issues that make them particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus threat.

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5. Finally, we ask that all those in attendance at Sunday worship services take note of the following precautions that will be taken to minimize risk of virus transmission:

- a) Special cleaning will be performed before both services.
- b) Those entering the sanctuary will be encouraged to proceed directly to their pews without lingering in the foyer, or exchanging handshakes and hugs.
- c) Alternating pews will be roped off, and signs will be posted reminding worshippers to maintain at least 6 feet between households.
- d) Tithes and offerings will be collected by means of collection plates made available in the back of the sanctuary, rather than passed, with instructions given to designate checks “general fund” or “diaconal fund.”
- e) The nursery will not be made available; parents will instead be encouraged to keep their children with them the entire time they are on campus.
- f) The use of restrooms and water fountains will be discouraged.
- g) Communion elements will be spaced apart on tables placed at the front of the sanctuary, and will not be attended by elders and deacons; those coming forward will be directed to maintain 6 feet of space between households.
- h) Psalms and hymns will be printed in the bulletin, thus removing the necessity for the use of the Psalter and songbook.
- i) Face coverings are recommended, though not required, by the governor’s order for indoor worship gatherings. Please bear this in mind, using your own judgment in the matter, and be prepared for differing decisions about this within our congregation. (Your elders intend to wear face coverings in worship for at least the next few weeks, except for when they are leading in worship or preaching.)
- j) Upon the conclusion of worship, those in attendance will be dismissed by pew and encouraged to proceed directly outside the building, without lingering in the foyer or exchanging handshakes and hugs. Fellowship at appropriate distances will be permitted outside.

Brothers and sisters, despite all these weighty precautions, your elders are very pleased at the prospect of our taking another step toward normalcy in our life together as a covenant community. We will remain watchful for the need to make adjustments to our plans in the weeks ahead, but we are hopeful that our participation in corporate worship will once again become a predictable part of our lives. Please continue to pray for God’s protection of us all during this global health crisis, as well his provision of peace and unity and love for one another as a congregation amid this trial.

With love for you in Christ,

The elders of Resurrection Presbyterian Church