

PHASE 2
(Phase 1 below)
(Phase 3 see the end)

January 15, 2021

Hello Church Family,

Last night at the Session meeting, the elders unanimously agreed to re-open SEPC for in-person worship on Sunday mornings. We will continue to follow the Phase 1 protocols we established last summer, which you can find below. Please remember that Phase 1 means we are limiting use of the church building to Sunday morning worship, and the church will remain closed for all other activities.

Jay will be speaking during the service on Sunday to provide more context around our decision. This has been a difficult time to be separated from one another, and we wrestled with our decision as we balanced the real threat of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the need to be together for corporate worship.

We recognize and understand that many of you have underlying conditions and other concerns that lead you to remain away from in-person gatherings. Our worship service will continue to be accessible over the live stream as it has since the spring. Please let me, Bill or any of the elders know about particular concerns or prayers requests you have.

Please also join us in prayer for a swift change in our current situation; that vaccines would be distributed rapidly and that we can return to fully embodied worship and life in this church. We look forward to seeing some of you this Sunday, and can't wait to be reunited with everyone soon.

On Behalf of the Session,
Alex Anderson

SEPC Phase 1 COVID-19 Protocols

- If you are in a high-risk category or have any personal reservations about attending, we strongly encourage you to stay home and participate via the streaming service.
- If you have tested positive for COVID, are running a temperature, have any other symptoms of illness, or believe you may have recently been exposed, please do not attend in person.
- During this first phase, the nursery and Little Lambs will not be offered.
- We encourage you to worship using the live stream for now if you need these programs or if you aren't comfortable having your whole family sit through the duration of the service.
- We have cordoned off every other pew to encourage people to remain 6 feet apart, and we will be allowing a maximum of 80 people in the sanctuary.
- Please seat 4 people or one family (with children) to a row.
- We will also be setting up chairs in a socially distanced layout in the fellowship hall.

- The service will be streamed and shown on a projector.
- Adult Sunday school room is not being used.
- All bathrooms will be available.
- The Sunday school wing doors will be locked and we will have signs to tell people to enter at the front of the church (or on the porch if the sanctuary is full).
- While inside, everyone ages 5 and up are required to wear a mask.
- Masks are available for those who do not have their own.
- We have removed hymnals and songbooks from the sanctuary and put them in the adult Sunday school room.
- Congregants in attendance will use the bulletin for the service.
- We will have available either hand sanitizer stations or small bottles of hand sanitizer.
- There will be at least 2 deacons on duty who will be wearing masks while welcoming people.
- The doors of the church will be opened so people don't have to touch surfaces.
- We will not be collecting the offering in person during this first phase. Please continue to give in any of the ways Mark Slavovsky outlines in the weekly bulletin.
- After the service starts, the doors in the back will be closed and will only be opened by a deacon. A sign will be placed outside instructing those who arrive after the doors have been closed to go to the fellowship hall (via the porch) to participate in the service.
- At the end of the service, musicians will play and everyone will be dismissed row by row by the deacons, starting from the back of the church - socializing should be done outside.
- The church will be cleaned on its normal schedule.

SEPC COVID-19 Phase 3 Protocols

Sun, Mar 28, 2:42 PM

Good Afternoon,

As many of you heard in an announcement this morning during worship, we are moving forward in the next phase of our COVID-19 protocols and re-opening the church. We are very encouraged by the recent news that both Tennessee and Georgia have opened eligibility for the COVID-19 vaccine to all residents age 16 and older, and we look forward to many in our congregation being fully vaccinated in the near future. We continue to thank the Lord for his provision and the wisdom of the men and women who have worked so hard to create and deliver these vaccines, which are the most effective tool to return to a state of “normal”. If you remain uncertain about the COVID-19 vaccines that are available, please speak with your primary care physician. Any of the elders or Bill would also be happy to listen to your concerns, pray with you and direct you to resources that we have found helpful in our discussions.

We also continue to review the guidance about how COVID-19 spreads, and we are rolling back some of the steps we took in 2020 related to limiting the number of surfaces that congregants touch during the service. If you would like further guidance, please see the [CDC resources in the hyperlink](#).

Phase 3 of our COVID-19 protocols are as follows and are effective on Easter Sunday, April 5.

1. The nursery program will restart for all children ages 0-2. Masks will continue to be required for all adults and children age 5 and above, even when working in the nursery. Also, where possible in our nursery, social distancing should continue to be observed. Please be looking out for Elea's emails to coordinate volunteers for our nursery program.
2. Hymnals and songbooks will be returned to the pews and be used during the service
3. The offering plate will be passed during the offering of our gifts.
4. The communion plates will be passed during the Lord's Supper.

Thank you all for your patience and prayers as we continue to consider what is best for the entire church community during this pandemic. We continue to discuss and pray for these matters as a Session. We hope we can continue to bring back more programs as most in our community are vaccinated and hospitalization counts continue to decline.

If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with any elder or Bill.

Thank you,
Alex Anderson