

March 28, 2021

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 [CDC resources at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html)

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

EPC Phase 3 COVID-19 Protocols

- If you are in a high-risk category and not-yet-vaccinated or have any personal reservations about attending, we 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.
- The Nursery is open and available to all children under age 3
- 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 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.
 - 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.
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- The church is open during the week and accessible for committee meetings and other gatherings, though such gatherings are currently restricted to the fellowship hall with social distancing and mask-wearing.
 - Small groups continue meeting in homes at the discretion of those involved; social distancing and mask-wearing is recommended.