

May 12, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ at Peace,

I did not know that I would be writing again so soon, but I want to start this letter with words of commendation: **Good job and well done!**

**Good job** following the guidelines for health and safety! **Good job** remembering to love your neighbor as yourself! I was impressed with how many people made the difficult choice to be cautious as a way of expressing care and concern for others. Last week, I was extremely concerned that we would have a massive influx of people the first weekend back, which is why I added the third Sunday service. But you showed restraint and thoughtfulness in your activity choices. **Thank you!**

With that in mind, I want to offer to you a revised worship schedule that I believe we will be able to sustain for the next few weeks.

1. **We will IMMEDIATELY switch to our 8:00 and 10:00 am summer worship times.** Switching to these two times comes one week early! We will use these two worship times beginning this Sunday, May 17, and will continue to use them – God willing – the rest of the Summer months.
2. **We will NOT be having Saturday evening worship for the next weeks.** This difficult decision is partially based on limiting the amount of exposure that I have over the course of three (or more) services on a weekend. Congregational leaders will revisit this decision as the Summer continues and will keep you up to date.

Please know that we are continuing to recommend the guidelines that we have received from the State of Indiana. (Again, please go to the following website for the full list of guidelines: [https://www.backontrack.in.gov/files/BackOnTrack-IN\\_PlacesOfWorship.pdf](https://www.backontrack.in.gov/files/BackOnTrack-IN_PlacesOfWorship.pdf))

For the time being, these recommendations are:

- All individuals who are 65 and above or who have an underlying at-risk health condition are asked to stay home and watch services online for the time being
- We are asking that anyone who is symptomatic or who has tested positive for COVID-19 to not enter the building
- We will continue to have services online through our website, Facebook, and YouTube
- We will ensure 6 feet between individuals or family units of the same households during services – *this means that we will have a 100 person capacity at our services!*

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- We will have marked seating, alternating rows – *this means you might not sit in the 'usual' spot!* Pews marked with a blue X will be left vacant.
- We will continue to clean between each service, disinfecting high-contact surfaces
- We will continue to place hand sanitizers in high-contact locations and will ask staff, members, and guests to sanitize their hands as they enter the building
- We are recommending everyone put on a face covering before entering the building
- We will continue to implement non-contact greetings
- We will not be offering coffee or snacks between services
- We will not be having communion yet; we are working on a routine for safe distribution
- At the conclusion of the service, we will dismiss worshipers in a way that supports social distancing
- And you will see readily visible signage to remind everyone of best hygiene practices

As you have done, please continue to make good, sound, and healthy decisions for yourselves, for your friends and family, and for the entire community, and do not regard this as an occasion to 'simply return to normal.' *The virus continues to plague our community, and we will act with appropriate caution and sensitivity!*

I am also willing and able to set up **PRIVATE COMMUNION VISITS** during the week. Please send me an email (PastorT@plcms.org) or call me to set up a time.

As in weeks before:

1. We will continue to use the Internet for our worship broadcasts. Please utilize these as appropriate to your situation.
2. We will continue using our website ([plcms.org](http://plcms.org)) and Facebook ([facebook.com/plcms](https://facebook.com/plcms)) for links to services, resources, devotional materials, and additional announcements.
3. All other activities in the building remain cancelled until further notice—except Wee Creations who re-opened this week.
4. Our staff will continue to work from home as much as possible.
5. Our weekly e-newsletter will continue to be sent out with information and announcements; please read it over! If you have not received it, please email Gina and she will get you on our contact list (GTeeple@plcms.org).

I would like to conclude with words from St. Paul in Romans 12:1-5:

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

Pastor Jeffrey Teeple