



FROM: THE DESK OF PASTOR CARUANA
TO: The People of Zion
DATE: August 13, 2020

CHANGE ... IT'S HAPPENING ALL AROUND US

Fact: Change invariably heightens emotional stress, causes worry and fear; often affects people negatively; increases depression, frustration, and irritability; creates opposing sides, and promotes conflict. More simply said, most people are not thrilled with change, particularly when it seems to bombard us from all sides.

The headline in Tuesday morning's LNP shouted out, "**STATE: DON'T OFFER CLASSES IN-PERSON** (*Latest advice runs directly counter to the approach most county schools are taking.*)" On the front of Wednesday morning's LNP it stated, "**DOCTORS: SOME KIDS WILL FALL ILL** (*Pediatricians advise parents to plan for school outbreaks.*)" On a different front, the Big Ten and Pac-12, two historic and powerful football conferences, have succumbed to the pandemic and canceled their fall football seasons. These warnings ... these changes in direction ... trigger school administrators to rethink what schools should do. Parents are concerned about the decisions they have made about sending their children to school. All these last-minute announcements and changes have heightened emotional stress, cause worry and fear, frustration, and even conflict.

But change isn't only affecting the schools and sports ... it's also impacting our daily lives and our church. Questions are still abounding concerning indoor vs. outdoor worship; what should our worship "look like" as the pandemic continues; when will in-church Sunday School begin; how can we keep people safe? Why aren't we doing more social things at the church? Why can't meetings be held in the church?

The problem we all face is that change is happening all around us in reaction to conflicting data, the uncertainty about what is really happening with the spread of the coronavirus, and our desire to do the right things so we can return to "normalcy" yet maintain safety for all.

Although we have tried to keep the congregation up to speed on the decisions being made by the leadership of the church and be as transparent as possible, it seems as though we have not been successful with our attempts. Therefore, I would like to provide a recap of how Zion is proceeding and what to expect as we move forward. Please keep in mind that, depending on the impact and spread of the coronavirus, anything can change in the blink of an eye. The best we can do is write our plans in sand and be as ready as we can to change our directions in a moment's notice.

So, what has taken place at Zion during the past six months ...

Concerning cleaning

- a. Special disinfectants have been purchased to allow us to clean high touch areas, including the pews in the sanctuary, within a short period of time.
- b. Special rags, masks, and gloves have been purchased.
- c. All books and pew materials have been removed from the Sanctuary.
- d. High-touch points have been determined and proper procedures for cleaning have been established.
- e. Deep cleaning of the church will be done before in-church services begin.
- f. Hand sanitizer units have been installed in the hallways, Connection Zone, and the Social Hall.
- g. Safety and informational signs have been made and will be hung throughout the church.

Concerning worship

- a. Worship services have been provided via video both on a restricted YouTube site and Zion's website thanks to the efforts of Dave and Riley Klepper. As we have announced in the past, efforts are being made to continue to have video services after Riley leaves for college with her equipment. Please keep in mind that Zion will not be equipped to do videoing in the near future unless it can be determined how this can happen. Several options have been tried but have been unsuccessful. Glick Audio will meet a group from Zion today to provide information about how we can continue to do videoing as well as the cost of doing it since we **DO NOT** have the equipment needed. We will also need volunteers to help do the videoing each week. Announcements have been issued throughout the summer about the need for volunteers; however, few members have stepped forward. There may be a period of time when we will be unable to provide videos of the service and may need to resort to online bulletins with the sermons inserted until proper equipment is available.
- b. The decision was made, based on survey information from the congregation, to begin in-church worship on September 13 at 8:30 and 11:00. If necessary, a third service will be added on Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. Only 25 people will be allowed in the church for each service. This number includes the Pastor, Music Director, two ushers, a projection person, and an individual taking temperatures when worshippers enter the building.
- c. **Members must call into the church to reserve seating at a service.** Seating has been established based on social gathering rules which require people to maintain 6 feet apart. When individuals call in, they will be asked if they will help perform various volunteer functions. This is critical to have in-church worship.
- d. The service will be a simple service. Although it was originally announced that we would not have communion, a decision has now been made to provide communion using individual communion kits containing a wafer and grape juice. Individuals at home may commune using bread or crackers and wine or juice following the

speaking of the Words of Institution. A simple no-touch passing of the peace *may* be used. Individuals will be shown how to do the simple passing of the peace when we gather for in-church worship.

- e. Paper bulletins will not be distributed. The service will be projected on the screen. The projection will include headings, responses & scripture lessons.
- f. Electronic copies of the weekly bulletin will continue to be emailed and paper copies will be mailed to those without computers or iPads.
- g. Masks must be worn by all worshippers.
- h. Three offering plates will be available for worshippers to drop in their donations ... in the narthex, in the back of the sanctuary, and in the front of the sanctuary.

Concerning Sunday School/Faith Formation

- a. There will be no in-church Sunday School for children or adults until it is deemed safe to do so.
- b. Virtual Sunday School can be done via Zoom, Google Meet, or some other platform.
- c. There will be no in-person youth gatherings, Kids' Club, or nursery care until it is deemed safe.

Concerning Social Gatherings

- a. Initially there will be no social gatherings such as the Coffee Hour, picnics, etc. until social gathering restrictions are lifted. It has been determined that during social gatherings even the best-intentioned individuals gradually move closer and closer increasing the possibility of spreading the virus. It is suggested that small groups of people may wish to gather outdoors at member's homes.

Concerning miscellaneous things

- a. Outside groups such as Scouts may not use the church until it is deemed safe.
- b. In-church Community Meals are prohibited until it is deemed safe; however, pick-up meals may be provided in the future.

I am aware this is not the way all members would like to see things happening, but under the current circumstances, it is important to constantly consider the safety of all people and move forward slowly. The virus is still highly active, and restrictions may be in place for another year or longer. Some predictions are stating that the virus will never disappear since, other than smallpox, no virus has been eliminated ... instead they have been controlled through vaccines and the natural effects of herding.

Have faith. Keep calm. Trust God.

† In Christ,

Pastor Barb