

*"Because we loved you so much,
we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God
but our lives as well."*

(2 Thessalonians 2:8)

Dear Redeemer family,

We are ready to share more of our lives with one another again.

Covid immunity is rapidly increasing, especially for the most vulnerable. Nearly all the Covid tracking metrics are at the safest levels since the pandemic began, and continue to trend better. Though there will always be some level of risk in life's meaningful activities, the data and experts agree that the relative risk for serious Covid illness in our community is a small fraction of what it used to be. For this we give thanks.

We had communicated our state government's mask requirements for six months. Then on February 4th, one coequal branch of state government officially opposed the emergency powers used by another branch. The third branch hasn't provided clarity. Since the state government's authority to which we submit is now unclear in this area, we've discontinued referencing state mask mandates in church communications. Individual consciences will guide different people differently.

Throughout this last year, as we made decisions on limiting the activities of our congregational life, our leadership has taken guidance from a variety of sources including our national and state governments, our own county health department, and other health organizations. These sources continue to guide us as we consider the physical health of the congregation, but we must also consider the mental, emotional, and spiritual needs of our members. The relationships that we build and the interactions that we have with each other are important parts of church life that God uses to keep our church family spiritually healthy and strong, and they cannot be overlooked.

Christ's mandate to love one another, and St. Paul's encouragement to yield to one another continue to guide us in all things. At this far safer point in the pandemic, we respect that different members of our church family will prioritize different elements of living the life God has given us, whether that be safeguarding their physical health, sharing more of their lives with one another, or any number of other things.

After reaching out to 200 member families for their input, and discussing our members' needs, the Council has decided we'll take these steps beginning **Palm Sunday, March 28**:

- Return to 3 weekly services
- 10:30 AM Sunday and 6:30 PM Monday services are *mask-recommended*. We are asking those attending these services to wear masks throughout the entirety of the service.
- 8:00 AM Sunday service is *mask-optional*. Worshipers at these services may feel free to remove their mask once they are seated.
- 9:15 AM Bible Class will remain mask-recommended.
- A children's sermon will be included in the service on one or two non-communion Sundays/month.
- Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services are mask-recommended.

Unless there becomes a compelling reason not to do so, the final restrictions will be removed on **Sunday, June 6**. The late service will move to the summer schedule of 9:30 AM. As we did last August and September, we will hold this service outside in the month of June, culminating in a service and outdoor picnic on June 27th at the end of our annual Soccer Camp.

Thank you for the love, patience, and understanding that you have exhibited as we've faced the challenges of the past twelve months together as a family of believers. May the Lord continue to bless us as we serve him and each other.

Your servants in Christ, The Redeemer Church Council