

Overview

CCC Sunday Worship Starting January 17th

9am - In-person services (masks required) + Community Kids (masks required)
10:30 am – In-person services (masks recommended) + Community Kids (masks required)
10:30 am – Online Gathering - Livestream on Facebook and YouTube
6 pm – 8 pm – Student Community (masks required)

Church Letter

Dear Church Family,

We are excited to return to in-person services this Sunday, January 17th. We will have in-person worship services at 9 am and 10:30 am, with a 10:30 am live stream on Facebook and YouTube. Community Kids will also reopen during both services this Sunday. Our desire is to connect and serve both the in-person gathering and those who will continue to join online. We desire to see both groups fully engaged and connected to our mission, "To Be and Make Disciples of Jesus Among All Nations."

Our decision to return to in-person services was not made lightly. I think it is important for you to hear our heart, so that you can understand our motivation for returning. Our return is not political, nor is it anti-science. This decision was made through prayer and discussing both the health and spiritual implications of our decision as a church. We believe that we were made to physically gather and worship the Lord together, and it was never our desire for our Sunday morning worship services to be online only. When we went to online-only gatherings in March last year, this decision was due to a stay-at-home order that was issued by the governor. With the spread of the pandemic, we moved to online-only services to support the governor's order. We returned to worship on May 24th and continued to have in-person and online gatherings through November 22nd. On November 26th, we made a decision to go back to online-only services for a period of time. The positivity rates had increased across the state to a point that the state issued further recommendations and requirements on social gathering size to slow the spread of COVID 19. In addition, Columbus Regional Hospital and the mayor both requested that churches consider online worship services for a period of time to help slow the spread and to support our local hospitals by limiting large group gatherings. Within CCC, we also were experiencing an increased number of COVID 19 cases among our members and staff. All of these factors were a part of us making a decision to go back to online-only services in November. Looking back, I believe that our decision to move to online-only services again in November was the right decision for our church at the time.

From the date of the shutdown, the question we have had before us was, "when will we return to in-person gatherings?" As we looked at the different triggers that we might consider for having in-person gatherings, one of the guidelines that stood out to us was the capacity limitations for school events and sporting events. While social gathering limits are based on a specific number of people, other community events and gatherings are based on a percentage capacity. CCC's worship center can accommodate approximately 200 people per service socially distanced. This is less than 25% capacity of

the worship center. While churches are not bound to gathering size limitations under the governor's executive order, using this limitation as a guideline allows us to move forward with in-person services and do so responsibly.

We also realize that under the governor's executive order that churches are exempt from the mask mandate. In 2020, we took a cautious approach with our in-person gatherings and required everyone 2 years and over to wear a mask. Our motivation was for as many people as possible to have the opportunity to participate in worship services without hesitation of those that were not wearing masks. With a pandemic and the spread of a virus, we felt that this was the wise approach so that we could minimize the spread of COVID and maximize the opportunity for us to continue meeting. We understand that there are varying opinions within our congregation in regard to masks. With this, we would like to offer a different approach with masks in 2021. **For our 9 am service, we will continue requiring that everyone wear a mask in the building and during the worship service. For our 10:30 am service, we are recommending that you wear a mask. For those that choose to remove your mask for worship, we ask that you attend the 10:30 am worship service.** Due to the difficulty to social distance in Community Kids, we will continue with our current mask policy until further notice. We want to do everything we can to continue to minister to the church and our community, and we believe that this will provide the flexibility for us to stay connected, and hopefully remove some of the barriers in attending worship.

Lastly, we have before us in 2021 a great calling to live our lives worthy of the calling that God has given us (Ephesians 4:1). God has given us so much through His Son Jesus, and we have the great responsibility to continue to grow and fulfill the purposes that He has for our lives and for our church this year. We are looking forward to all that God has for 2021 with great anticipation. As I end this letter, I am reminded of Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4:6-12,

"For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. ⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. ⁸ We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰ We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body. ¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

Let us allow the light and life of Christ shine brightly within us this year as we continue to live for Jesus!

In Christ,

Michael Mantoath
Lead Pastor