



May 2020

Hey CCC Family,

This is quite a long letter. Please sit back and take the time to read it in its entirety, so you are fully informed and many of your questions can be answered.

This week I have spent a great deal of time reading one of the stories of Daniel's life. Daniel was a faithful man of God who was living in exile. His earthly king passed an edict saying that only the king and no one else could be worshipped. Daniel faced a dilemma. Should he obey the earthly king, or should he obey the Scriptures and continue to obey God? Daniel's decision was a courageous one, filled with faith. He went home to his house, opened the window and prayed to God "just as he had always done." As a result, the king threw Daniel into the lions' den to punish him, yet God protected him.

We closed the doors to the church facility and in person worship on April 2, 2020. Regular in-person worship services and ministry events were canceled or moved to an online format. When the "stay at home order" was originally issued, the purpose was to "flatten the curve," in order to ensure hospitals and the healthcare system would not buckle under the ensuing pandemic. This made sense to most Americans and to our church's leadership. We complied willingly.

Since that time, we have hosted services each weekend, as well as small groups, prayer groups and ministry meetings online or via ZOOM. The church facility essentially remained closed except to necessary personnel. The church staff worked from home the majority of the time to ensure the safety of all. Overall, the experience has been a good one for our church family. Our viewing attendance through Facebook-Live, You Tube and the church website, as well as in many of your Facebook parties has continue to thrive with many new people viewing services who may have not entered the church facility in the past. Praise God!

The online services have benefitted many and continue to serve a purpose. However, the impact and importance of incarnational gatherings (in-person) of the Body of Christ, the Church, cannot be underestimated or devalued. Yes, we can worship, study the Word, etc. at home. But it is not the same. We are commanded by God to "not neglect meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing." (Hebrews 10:25) I harken back to the days of the Hebrew slavery in Egypt from the book of Exodus. The Hebrews could worship God in Egypt in their homes, but God had a plan and wanted His people to worship Him freely. Thus, He commanded Pharaoh through Moses to let His people go and worship Him. And God was so serious about it, He sent many plagues upon Egypt to make Pharaoh obey Him. And as Pharaoh released the Hebrews, they had to willingly leave the safety of Egypt and head out into the dangerous wilderness following Moses (and God) to an unknown place.

Now after 40 days in lockdown, the state government continues to extend the stay at home order and has categorized churches as one of the last "businesses" to reopen. For some reason, we have been deemed "non-essential" by the public authorities. While Walmart, Home Depot, liquor stores and cannabis dispensaries have been considered essential business, the church was relegated to the sidelines. We strongly disagree with this characterization. With the bleak and hopeless stories portrayed on the news throughout the day, churches and Christian leaders are more important now than ever. Our people and our community need the Presence, hope, joy, and love of Christ. We need it more than we need food for the body. We need food for the soul, which includes worship, fellowship, Communion, the Word, service, etc.

The Elders of CCC have decided we will begin hosting limited in-person services at the church facility beginning Sunday, May 31. **We will continue to host three online services weekly (Saturday @ 6pm, Sunday at 8:45 & 10:30 am) just as we have since the beginning of April. The three services will continue in their current format and will have two different sermons per week.** (Same at 6 & 10:30, different at 8:45) The new in-person services will be different than the way they were prior to the shutdown in a variety of ways:

- 1) In the beginning, in-person services will only be open for people currently in the CCC family.
- 2) Every family or individual **will need to RSVP** online to let us know which service they are attending and to reserve their seats in the sanctuary. (details on the RSVP process will be announced later)
- 3) Everyone will be asked to practice social distancing:
 - a. The seating capacity of the sanctuary will be limited to 50 attendees. Once we hit capacity, we will not be able to let anyone else enter the facility.
 - b. Two seats (or 6 feet) of distance will be required between each individual or between each family unit.
 - c. Every other row of seats will be left empty.
- 4) Masks will be worn by attendees. Bring your own, though we will have a few extra disposable masks for people who forget their masks at home.
- 5) Everyone will be asked to stay home if they have any sort of illness.
- 6) Temperatures will be taken when you arrive via infrared thermometer for the protection of all.
- 7) Everyone in an at-risk group will be asked to stay home indefinitely.
- 8) The KidZONE will remain closed for the time being.
- 9) The Nursery will remain closed for the time being.
- 10) No water, coffee or foods of any kind will be served.
- 11) The tables, benches and chairs that have been in the lobby will be stored.
- 12) No congregating will be permitted without social distancing.
- 13) No "meet and greet" time during the service.
- 14) We will not be distributing bulletins; we will not provide Bibles or pens; bring your own.
- 15) Restrooms, all touch surfaces, all handles, and chairs will be disinfected before and after services.

Initially, one service will be offered on Sunday morning, May 31 at 10:30 am. A second service will be offered on Wednesday evening, June 3 at 6:30 pm. We will not offer 6 pm Saturday or 8:45 am Sunday in-person services initially. Depending upon how many people are interested in the in-person format versus the online format, additional in-person services will be added as we head back toward offering our three weekend services later this year. For the time being, all other events, including small groups, will continue to meet in their online formats. And to reiterate, **we will continue to host three online services weekly (Saturday @ 6pm, Sunday at 8:45 & 10:30 am). The three services will continue in their current format and will have two different sermons per week, just as we always have.**

If you or your family are nervous or uncomfortable attending in-person services, **it is ok!** Continue to participate in services online until you feel comfortable and safe. We do not want anyone to feel pressured in any way. We are making this available for the people who want to attend and feel the conviction in their soul to attend in-person services. The cool thing is for a time, we will be offering essentially 5 services per week, 2 in-person and 3 online!

We will be in touch with you if you serve on service support ministry teams asking your intention. That is not for the purpose of pressure. It is simply so we can plan accordingly.

This time has been unprecedented in our history as a nation and as a church. We can assure you the Elders are not making this decision lightly. We all have prayed diligently and fervently and, in unity, have agreed this is the right thing for us to do as a church family. We are joining with approximately 3,600 other churches throughout California as we open our doors in a limited way on Sunday, May 31. Interestingly, May 31 is Pentecost. This is the celebration of when the Holy Spirit arrived on the scene in the early Church. His arrival was the beginning of the Church. This Pentecost 2.0 is the new beginning of the church for a new season of ministry life.

Please continue to pray for our nation, our city and our church, including our church's leadership. We continue to pray for you daily and diligently. Prayer is our communication connection with our Almighty God who can heal, redeem and restore all things.

Please do not make an issue of this on social media. Please do not share anything on social media including varied opinions if you agree or disagree with this decision. We do not want this decision to be divisive, nor do we want to attract undue attention. We are doing our best to discern the will of God in this for our church family. If you have questions or concerns, please contact one of our Elders, one of our pastors, or contact me directly. 858-442-5623. God is doing great things in our midst. Whether you come to in person services or you attend services online, I believe God will bless and touch your heart abundantly.

Much love in Christ,

Pastor Darrell