

August 27, 2020

Dear New McKendree Family,

With all that's going on in our world, I think we'd all agree that there's no shortage of news out there. But, what is in short supply is good news. That said, I've got some good news to share. It's been a long time coming—five months and a few days to be exact—but on the weekend of September 12th and 13th we're finally going to be able to worship together in the beauty of our High Street sanctuary. Just as it was before the COVID monster hit, our worship services will be at 5 pm on Saturday and 9 am on Sunday. And, when we do start back, we'll be blessed by our New McKendree Choir; led by Sheila Cunningham and accompanied by Linda Thompson. Later in the month we'll be blessed in worship by Crystal Goodwin and our Bell Choir.

Our God has doubly blessed his New McKendree family...and I mean that literally. God blessed us with two incredible worship facilities. Thanks to the blessing of our South Campus facility we've been able to gather for worship since early July. Not only have I appreciated worshipping with you all under the same roof, but I'm also thankful that, over the past two months, our leadership team and volunteers have grown very proficient at caring for us and keeping us safe during our worship gatherings. What they've learned and the experience they've gained at South Campus will serve us well as we venture back into our High Street home.

Folks, worshipping once again amidst the familiar beauty of our High Street sanctuary is going to be great...different, but great nonetheless. Here's a few of the COVID nuances and precautions that you can expect. First, and most importantly, I strongly...no, I strenuously...encourage you all to wear masks. If you don't have a mask, no worries. Our Hospitality Team will provide you with one. Another COVID nuance—one that we've all become used to by now—is social distancing. Maintaining social distance is a bit more challenging at High Street than it is in our South Campus worship center, but it can be done. As they've been doing since the beginning of July, our incredible Hospitality Team will be there to keep us appropriately spread out and safe. That means that there's a good chance that you may not be able to sit where you sat in the good ole pre-COVID days, but as long as we're together and we're safe it'll be worth it. Finally, we ask that you enter and exit through either of the two main entrances on the east side of the sanctuary, the Adams Street entrance on the north side of the sanctuary, or via the lower level west entrance.

Folks, finally gathering to worship our God in the beauty of our High Street sanctuary will be a milestone event in the life of our New McKendree family...truly, an answered prayer. But, I'm also very aware that, for many of you, our first Sunday back will no doubt be bittersweet. While I'm confident that we're taking every necessary precaution, I realize that many of you, for very good reason, will not, and should not, risk the exposure. Please know that I fully respect your decision. For those who can't be with us, an audio recording of our traditional service is broadcast each Sunday at 10:30 am; 101.9 FM and 1170 AM on your radio dial. Also, while we don't yet have the capability to offer a video recording of our High Street traditional services, we will soon. My goal is to have the necessary audio and video recording technology in place by October.

Folks, we're living through some crazy, unprecedented times. Who in a million years would've dreamed that simply gathering for worship could be so complicated? I know it's kind of weird, but what's not weird these days? Nonetheless, this is the season and this is the mission field that we're called to serve. I thank God that Brenda and I get to serve in this time and in this place alongside you; our New McKendree family. And, I thank God that, on the weekend of September 12th and 13th, we'll once again have the opportunity to worship with you in our High Street Sanctuary.

Until then, remember...God's got this, so keep on looking up and keep on loving and caring for one another. See you in worship!

Your brother in Christ,

