

Adding a Second Service

Seven Mile Road Church

Launch Date: April 12, 2015



Why are we moving towards having two services?

There are four reasons why we think we need to move to two services: space, growth, mission, and church planting.

Space: The most obvious reason is because of space, or the lack thereof. In 2014, we averaged 114 adults on a Sunday and 60+ children. With all 160 of our chairs out, we are at full capacity. There is no way we can continue to grow numerically in our current setup.

Growth: We have never been focused on numbers. At the same time, we are for growth when it means more people meeting Jesus and living in His community on His mission. Church growth experts have all agreed on the 80% Rule – meaning when 80% of the room is full, growth tends to stall. Though church folks love a packed room, a crowded room can be quite overwhelming and even undesirable for an unchurched person. Think of a movie theater – would you rather go to a crowded one or one with plenty of room? By this, all we mean is that we want to be hospitable to unchurched folks and we think moving to two services may help.

Mission: We love having the room full on Sundays as it has been for quite a while. At the same time, how have we grown and with whom? Are we connecting with Christians looking for a new church or with non-Christians who don't know Jesus? Growth can give us a false sense that we are doing well with mission when in fact we may not be. Moving to two services and sitting in a half empty room, will hopefully be a powerful reminder to us that Jesus still has lots of work for us to do.

Church Planting: We are still completely committed to planting more churches – globally, nationally, and locally. However, there are a number of practical reasons why planting a church as a 200 person congregation may be more optimal than planting as a 100 person congregation. In essence, rather than derailing us planting another church locally, making room for growth by moving to two services can actually help us be in a better position to do so. All the same, let's be faithfully praying that the Lord would raise laborers, specifically church planters, for His harvest (Matthew 9:38).



gospel.
community.
mission.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is our long-term goal/vision?

When SMR was planted, adding additional services was never an expressed or desired goal. On the other hand, we have always had a sincere desire to raise up church planters and send SMR people out to plant new churches. Therefore, adding a second service is still a step towards that greater goal. So, if we come to the place where we can send out folks to plant a new church and move back to a single service, we would see that as a step forward.

What other options did we consider?

Lots of them honestly. Selling the property and moving, renting another location big enough to have one service, having an “overflow room” in the chapel, building a bigger sanctuary, capping attendance and doing nothing – we’ve thought through as many options as possible. However, given the four realities above, none seem to be a viable or sustainable option for the direction we believe the church should go.

How are other churches managing this issue?

It varies. Some have done capital campaigns to build bigger facilities. Some have created an “overflow room” or even another site/campus where attendees watch the service on a screen. Some have done nothing and turned people away. And some have moved towards adding services. We don’t believe there is only one “right” way to handle this issue, but we wanted to find a solution that allowed us to be good stewards of our finances and resources, provided the best opportunity to reach non-Christians, and allowed us to quickly find a solution to this immediate need. After considering all of our options, adding another service seems like

the best option for us to realize the goals stated above.

How about if we don’t have enough people in a service after we launch?

Initially, that’s exactly what we expect and what we want you to anticipate as well. It will be quite a mental and emotional adjustment to go from a bustling room with over a hundred adults to a half-filled room with fifty. We imagine, quite often we will all think, “Why did we do this again? Did we really need to do this? The room is empty!” Yet hopefully, that will remind us that we need to invite cousins, friends, neighbors, co-workers, classmates, and more to our GCMs and our service. We need to be missionaries so that it might be said that the “Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved (Acts 2:47).”

Having said this, we will keep a close eye on overall attendance and growth patterns. If for some reason it becomes clear that two services are not needed, we have no problem going back to one service. For us, this is a method and we are not married to methods.

Will this have any impact on GCM?

No.

What times will the services be held?

We will hold two services each Sunday: 9:00 and 11:15 am.

Frequently Asked Questions

How will we decide which service to go to?

Each individual or family will be able to choose which of the two services they would like to attend. We ask that you would primarily attend the service that you selected, while understanding that you may occasionally choose to attend the alternate service. Our plan is to survey each member soon to determine which service they will choose. Once we receive the results, we may ask for volunteers to attend a specific service in order to better distribute attendance.

Is this essentially going to be two churches?

Not at all. Though we may have two service times for worship, we are one local body, under one leadership.

If not, how are we all going to stay connected?

We imagine that the most difficult part of this whole thing is that we love worshipping together and seeing each other every Sunday. Not being able to do so will be hard and so there are two structured ways that we will fight to stay connected through this transition and beyond.

GCM: Though we cannot underestimate the importance of Sunday worship, the reality is that much of the life of our church happens through GCM. This is still the avenue through which you experience true community and live on mission. Thus, regardless of which service you attend, we will still stay connected with one another through GCM.

Joint-Services: While some of this will depend on growth and space, we imagine that there will be special occasions and opportunities for us to gather together (baptisms, Christmas

Eve service, Good Friday, fasting and prayer meetings, etc.).

Beyond the structured ways, there are countless organic opportunities where we would encourage each of you to take the initiative and the effort to connect with others in the church. Being hospitable, friendly, and welcoming will be even more important than ever.

We struggle with volunteers today. How are we going to have enough for 2 services?

Each ministry team is working hard to build a volunteer schedule to support the 2 services with the goal of not overburdening folks. We will be using a new software called *Planning Center* which will help us with scheduling and identifying potential schedule conflicts. Also, we recently held a "Ministry Fair" where several of our newer folks signed up for various ministries and our volunteer pool has grown. Having said this, more that ever, we need all hands on deck! If you looking or able to place (Sunday School, media, welcome, etc), we need your help!

Are there budget impacts to having two services?

We do not anticipate any material budget impacts.



How will Sunday School work?

Both services will offer Sunday School for children from nursery through second grade. Additionally, we are adding a class for third graders (generally age 8+) in between the two services at 10:30. There will also be a few new procedures for checking in and checking out children for Sunday School as we seek to improve of safety policies and procedures. These changes will be communicated to you soon by our Sunday School directors.



Why are we considering a class for 8+ in between services?

We value worshipping God with our children. We do this now by having our children, regardless of age, participate with us in corporate worship at the beginning and end of our service. By adding a third grade class from 10:30-11:10, we will provide an opportunity for our older children to attend corporate worship with their parents, while at the same time ensuring that age-specific instruction is available to them.

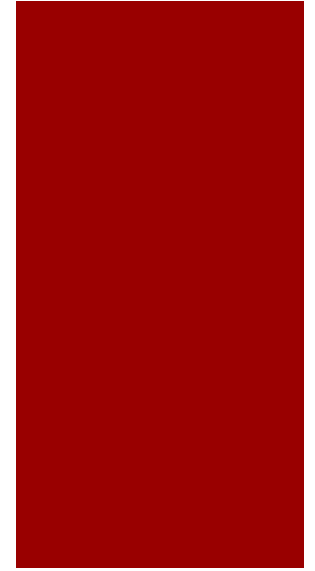


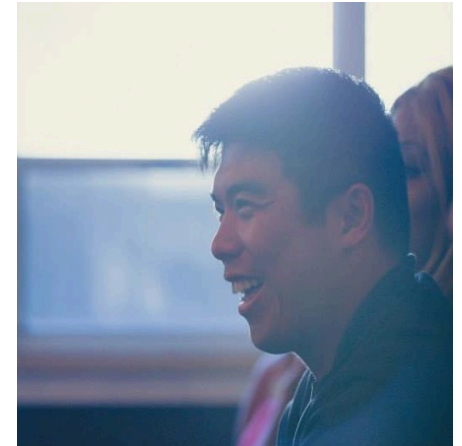
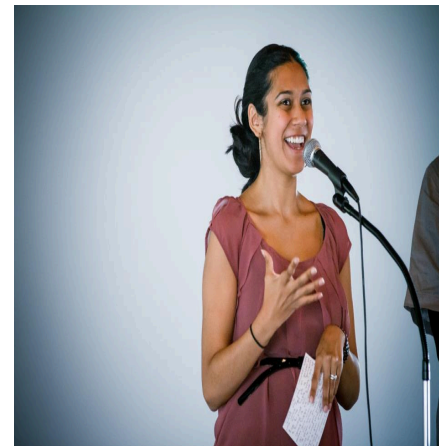
We usually have meetings after service now (members', BTC, Soul Care training, etc). What will we do now?

Offering two services won't allow us to conduct meetings/trainings until after 12:45 p.m. Depending on the type of meetings, we may choose to gather after the second service, on Sunday evenings, or during the week.

How will we address growth in the future? Will we keep adding services?

Again, our hope is to send people out to plant churches. That much we know. Beyond that, we will need to keep adjusting as we go.





Is this Biblically ok?

Great question. Ultimately, we don't want to be guided by pragmatics but by Scripture. In terms of what the Bible might say about a church having more than one Sunday service, we considered the following four categories.

- A. *Commanded by Scripture:* The Bible says we should do this.
- B. *Prohibited by Scripture:* The Bible says we should not do this.
- C. *Permissible but not beneficial:* The Bible says we may do this but it may not be beneficial.
- D. *Permissible and beneficial:* The Bible says we may do this and it may be beneficial.

We ruled out A and B. There is nothing in the Scripture that explicitly commends or condemns a church for having two services. Then, we needed to settle on C or D. Our greatest hesitation was over the implications of one church (which is what we are) meeting at two different times for worship (not hearing preaching together, or taking communion together, etc). However, the argument that a church can only have one service was not completely compelling for us. Therefore, after lengthy conversation and prayer, we felt that we could lean towards D.



Pray

Let's be faithful in asking our Father to give us wisdom as we plan and prepare for this transition. Let's ask Him to keep us unified as change is never easy.

Let's also be praying for people in our lives who don't know God, asking the Spirit to open their eyes to the glory of Christ. Come Easter, let's ask God to fill our church with people we have prayed for By-Name.