



To my New Salem Church Family,

The first time I sat down to write a letter like this was “*way back*” on March 17th when we first made the hard decision to cease corporate worship at church. Can you remember the days when we were hoping to come back together on Easter Sunday? Well, we all know how that turned out!

Since then your church leadership has met a couple of different times to try and stay abreast of the everchanging COVID-19 threat and how our church would respond. In one of those meetings we decided to cease corporate worship basically until further notice. But in the most recent meeting, ***we decided it was time to make plans to reopen!***

So now I’m pleased to be writing to announce that we’re coming back to church this **Sunday, May 31st**. The purpose of this letter is to try and answer some of the many questions that I know you must have.

“What precautions is the Church taking on our behalf?”

- **We are going to be offering two services on Sunday. One at 9am and one at 11am.** This is meant to get as many people in church as possible while allowing for social distancing and to give us time to sanitize the sanctuary, lobby, and bathrooms between services.
- For the first few weeks back, to allow for social distancing, **there will be no Sunday school and no choir.**
- The doors and other surfaces will be sanitized periodically throughout the day.
- **Half of our pews will be marked off with ribbon to allow for social distancing.** Please do not sit in any of the marked pews unless you need to do so in order to sit with people who live in the same house as you.
- **We will not be passing the offering plates** for the foreseeable future. You may continue to give online or mail in your tithes and offerings. Time will be allowed in the service for you to place your offering in the wooden chest we will provide.
- We will be sharing in a Communion service this Sunday. We will again be using prepackaged communion elements so no one is passing the trays.

“What do I need to know (or do) before coming to Church Sunday?”

When deciding which service to attend, just know that both services will have the same set of music and that I will be preaching the same message. Only the 11am service will be available via live-stream.

Once you enter the building, please sanitize your hands. Since our lobby is not designed for social distancing, we ask that you please move directly into the sanctuary when you enter the building and fellowship in there. Please don’t block the doors and cause a backup in the lobby. And then when church is over, please carry on any conversations you want to have before entering the aisles to exit or after you get into the parking lot and a distance from the exit door.

“What about my children and teenagers?”

We love our children and students! We miss them terribly and cannot wait to get them back together. But it still seems a bit early to bring them all together in confined spaces. **So at first, there will be no nursery, Sunday School or Children’s Church.** Feel free to bring things to amuse your young children while we worship. We suggest you bring an age appropriate bag with snacks, crayons, quiet toys, etc. If you feel your child is being disruptive to you or someone else, the worship service will be streaming in the overflow seating area downstairs.

Tim and his team are beginning the discussion as to when *The Spot* will reopen. Please be patient with us and we’ll do our best to keep you in touch with news and updates.

I look forward to seeing you Sunday!

“I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go into the house of the LORD.” (Psalm 122: 1)

In HIM,
Pastor Ponder