

June 11, 2020

Dear CPC Members and friends,

We are pleased to announce that Cocoa Presbyterian Church will be reopening the sanctuary for public worship on June 28, 2020. The Session has been preparing for reopening by having the church professionally cleaned and sanitized and by making plans for social distancing in the sanctuary. We have ordered supplies to help us ensure that our congregation can feel safe while attending in person. The Media Team has been working hard to provide live streaming so that those who can't or those who are not yet ready to return may continue to participate from their homes.

These are uncertain times and we desire to meet together and worship but also want to be cautious and considerate of our own congregation, others and the medical community. An increase in COVID-19 in our community could overwhelm our medical community and we do not want to be part of the problem. Rest assured that, to our knowledge, no one in the congregation has contracted the virus and since we stopped meeting in the sanctuary, no one testing positive has been in the building. Because of that, the Session feels that the following safeguards will help us be considerate of our congregation and community. We hope you will not see these rules as imposing, but rather a concerted effort to ensure our sanctuary feels safe as possible so you can return to it with peace of mind.

Below you will find information about returning to worship:

- We will resume with Morning Worship only---no Sunday School. Adult Sunday School will be recorded and available on the internet as it has been the past three months. Morning Worship will be at 10:30 a.m. as usual and will be a shorter service than in the past (for now). The service will be very similar to what has been provided online.
- There will be no Nursery, Children's Sunday School or Children's Church offered until a later date.
- We will ask you to sit in the pews as marked for social distancing. You may not find your favorite seat available but please respect the closure of certain pews and parts of the pews. This has been done for the safety of those that want to return to public worship. We need to maintain certain procedures to ensure that all feel safe to attend.
- Please respect the personal space of others and maintain social distancing for the sake of those who continue to need to be very cautious when in public spaces.
- We will ask that you proceed directly into the sanctuary to find seating. At the end of the service, please remember to practice social distancing as you leave.
- An offering will not be collected during the service; there will be a safe place provided to leave an offering if you desire.
- Please feel free to use your own hand sanitizer or the ones provided for you in the Narthex before entering the sanctuary.

- Please bring and wear a mask if you are able. Again, this will help others around you feel safe and provide some level of protection for you, since the coronavirus is a vaporized, droplet-born virus. We will have masks available if you do not have one or forget to bring your own.
- Before returning to worship each Sunday, please ask yourself these two questions: Do I feel that I might be unwell? Have I been in close contact with someone who currently has COVID-19? If the answer to either of those questions is “yes”, please consider choosing to stay home on that Sunday and participate in worship through the internet.
- Although the coronavirus does not survive after 7 days in any condition outside the human body, each week the sanctuary “touchable surfaces” will be sanitized before the next Sunday’s service.
- For those who are “hearing challenged,” our plan is to provide “assistive hearing” devices, enabling the person to hear all of the service. These will be “ear buds,” with a standard plug to connect with the receivers. If you have your own “ear buds,” we encourage you to bring your own for sanitation purposes. If you do not have your own, the church ones will be sanitized after each service.
- Sadly, the Chancel Choir will not be participating yet in our service. Our Music Director (Sarina) will provide the leadership for determining the direction of our music ministry in worship during these unusual times.

Our prayer is that all of our congregation will feel safe to return in time and we can worship together as a whole. What a wonderful day that will be! In the meantime, let us remember the words of Paul in Galatians 6:10.

*“ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”*

Thank you for helping to take care of our congregation while we have been apart. Thank you for making phone calls and sending cards. Thank you for supporting the church financially. Thank you for praying for our congregation and pastor. You are the church and you are doing the ministry of the church. The building is just a tool for the church but you are what makes CPC a special place.

With love and thanks,

The Session of Cocoa Presbyterian Church