

Hello Family of Believers,

We certainly have seen a lot of change over the past 15 months!

Some of the required changes such as social distancing and structured seating still limit our fellowship- and we will all rejoice when these constraints can safely be removed from our worship. Still other changes such as introduction of a live stream worship option are here to stay because they have significantly improved our ability to minister and connect people to Jesus. We may still see other changes as we move toward a post Covid environment and restart of “normal”.

It is important for our Family of Believers to use this restart time as an opportunity to prayerfully refocus our facilities, programs, ministries, and yes- even service times around our Mission, Vision, and Values to provide the greatest ministry impact. We know that throughout the program year we have always supported three services. Prior to Covid we had a significant history of Saturday night services. Covid changes have given us new perspective, and we now have the significant and growing impact of our Thursday services to consider as well.

The elders have spent considerable time thinking and talking about future worship schedules. We talked about leveraging what we have learned during this pandemic to plan for a meaningful worship schedule when we kick off the fall schedule on Rally Day.

The question we pondered – what three services will give us the greatest ministry impact as we live out our mission, vision, and values? (If you have not read them recently, we encourage you to look at them again on any bulletin cover).

After thinking about, praying about, and discussing this question, we are strongly leaning towards the following schedule as the best path forward: maintaining a live stream option with in-person worship taking place on Thursday at 6 PM, Sunday 8am, and Sunday 10:45am. Here are some of the key points that are influencing us:

- We found on a resource called Church Answers that 1/3 of the American work force works on the weekends. And because shift work is very common in our community and many are working on the weekend, a yearlong Thursday service would give us a consistent opportunity to reach this community!
- We already know the importance of Thursday from May – October for those who go away on the weekend. This provides an opportunity to reach those that travel throughout year!
- Saturday has become a sabbath day for staff and has given them the opportunity to have one full day off with their families. This has been a tremendous gift to them especially in the life stage they are in with children in school (and a quality-of-life thing most of us take for granted).
- A year long Thursday service would mean we do not need to **add** a service every summer when there is already much work for staff to do regarding RSE, Youth Trips, VBS and many other summer activities after a busy program year.

One of our priorities in this discussion is ensuring that we are caring for each other! Please take this conversation and issue as an opportunity to consider and love one another well. We understand that within our Family of Believers there are different preferences and worship habits. We humbly encourage all of us to remember that we are a Family of Believers who promise to be focused on Growing in Christ, Sharing His Love, Encouraging Others regardless of the day. Some of us may have to adjust what we are

used to for the sake of others. The sacrifices we all make for our Savior and for each other are no small things and we rejoice that these all give us the opportunity to proclaim, 'blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.'

To assure we have not overlooked something that might be pertinent to this issue of service times, the Elders and Staff are hosting a meeting July 8, at 7 pm, to get your feedback. If you currently consider yourself a Thursday or Saturday worshiper, we encourage you to attend, or contact one of the elders prior to the meeting, to share your thoughts.

In Him,

Your Redeemer Elders