

May 20, 2021

Hello Church,

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28

I don't know about you, but what Jesus offers here sounds great. Rest. A time to be restored. A place to bring your burdens and lighten the load. All of this can be found as we spend time with Jesus. As the pandemic begins to play a smaller role in our lives and in the life of the church, my hope and prayer is that we would turn to the one who will bring us all rest – Jesus.

As we begin to make transitions back to pre-pandemic rhythms, I want to share a few of the ways in which the church is beginning to embrace the new realities ahead.

How will Worship Services be different between now and June 15TH?

While the CDC has produced new guidelines (May 13, 2021) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html> regarding the wearing of face masks by people who have been fully-vaccinated, this does not take affect here in California until June 15. With this in mind, the session has decided to allow singing during worship services indoors as long as the congregation maintains social distancing and is masked.

What does June 15th mean for us?

It is our intention to follow what the state of California decides to do in terms of a full reopening of the state – which at this point has been communicated as June 15th. If for some reason the state decides to adjust this timeline, our intention is to follow their lead on guidelines in California.

What happens after June 15th?

The California Department of Public Health has said that the CDC guidelines can be put into place on June 15th. With this in mind, the recommendation is that unvaccinated people should continue to use a mask and fully-vaccinated people do not need to wear a mask (but can continue to wear one if they wish).

Will the children be required to wear masks?

Children under the age of 12 do not have access to vaccinations. As such, in line with the recommendations of the CDC, we will be requiring the use of masks for children under the age of 12 until a time when the CDC's guidelines change.

Will students in our youth ministry be required to wear a mask?

For now, all students will continue to be asked to wear a mask. However, after June 15th, students over the age of 12 who have been fully-vaccinated will have the option of wearing a mask. Unvaccinated students will be asked to continue wearing a mask.

The elders have spent time praying and researching and discussing how to best navigate this ever-changing path. I am thankful for their diligence and care as we have gone through the process. I would ask that you continue to pray for us as we continue to discern how best to lead out of the pandemic and into the Kingdom-focused future God has in store for the Church.

I am excited to continue to serve as your pastor and if I can answer any questions, provide additional information, or just be a listening ear to what you are going through, please don't hesitate to reach out and ask.

I leave you with the words of Paul found in his letter to the Church in Ephesus:

"And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ."

Peace,

Keenan Barber