

Next Phase of On-site Worship begins July 5, 2020

Beginning Sunday, July 5, 2020, we will begin the next phase of on-site worship at St. Paul Lutheran Church. This has been a calculated process with the safety of attendees in mind each step of the way, especially our seniors and others in the high risk category. Beginning in May, we began the first phase of on-site worship by opening 20 family slots per worship service and utilizing a 6 ft. PVC guide to help worshippers determine what a safe social distance looked like in the pews. At that time, attendees were seated every third pew, choosing to be extra cautious as we began to come back together for on-site worship. Then in June, based on feedback from worship attendees, it was felt like we could gather with every other pew as a safe distance. With that parameter, we began to open up to 28 family units per service. Attendees then began to be seated in every other pew still utilizing the PVC guides as a safe distancing measure. During the month of June, primarily surveying those attending our Senior's Service with concerns for their safety in mind, we asked if they would feel safe with a self-distancing practice without the use of the PVC guides. With their affirmative response, the next phase was set for July, namely to remove the PVC guides that had been put in place as a safety measure when we began the initial phase process. So, July 5 begins the next phase as the PVC guides have been removed and safe self-distancing without the guides becomes the practice.

At a future date to be determined, the next phase will involve opening the worship setting up to additional attendees, while still practicing safe self-distancing in the pews. We were hoping to begin this also at the beginning of July. But, then the COVID-19 numbers began to climb in McLennan County. So, it seemed best to hold off on this phase for now. In the interim, we are hoping to gauge how many others we can seat safely if we have more than two smaller family units in one row at a time. Each step of the way in this process has been based on concerns for safety as we gather, based on feedback from worship attendees, and in discussions with congregation elders. Hopefully, we can begin this next phase in the weeks ahead.

In the meantime, please continue to register on-line for on-site worship attendance. This registration process serves several purposes. It assures that we can accommodate on-site worship attendees. It helps us plan for ample worship folders for the services. And, finally, if we were to have a case of COVID-19 reported by one of our on-site worshippers, the registrations will help us contact all attendees at that service in an expedient manner.

Thanks again to all of you for your patience in this process. Our goal remains to maintain a safe worship environment for those attending on-site worship. Admittedly, we have been overly cautious, not wanting to find ourselves in a situation as has been reported with other churches who did not establish safe practices and suddenly had large numbers of coronavirus outbreaks among their ranks. As we all know, dealing with a pandemic is uncharted territory. Please know we are trying to do the best we can to provide a safe on-site worship environment each step of the way. Also, please continue to pray that the Lord will bring this COVID-19 pandemic to an end sooner rather than later. God bless your day. –
Pastor Krueger