

Note from Pastor Barbara Aziz, May 21, 2020

Friends, I miss worshipping with you in person so much! I would give anything to open up the doors to the Sanctuary and welcome you all with hugs! But, the MOST important thing to me, our staff and our leadership team is to keep you all safe and healthy.

You will be seeing quite a few churches opening their doors in the coming weeks with serious restrictions. And, I've been in communication with many of my colleagues. The reality is that we cannot compare ourselves with other churches. The restrictions that most churches are putting into place will not work for Bracken...at least not right now.

For those who will be meeting, there are major restrictions including things like...People over the age of 60 or with compromised health are being asked to stay home. And, most of those churches have considerably larger and more flexible worship spaces than our Sanctuary or even our Fellowship Hall. Only 25%-50% of building capacity is allowed and six feet of distance is to be marked out. Masks are required. Singing is extremely questionable. And a thorough cleaning and disinfecting is required in between services.

We know first-hand how contagious this disease can be as we continue to pray for Pastor Dawn Baird and her family and many of our own friends and families who are now testing positive.

And so, I'm praying for your patience and continued prayers as we wait a while longer. I met last night with our Leadership Council and they agree that we do not have a date to give you. The planner inside of me is not happy. We will be in the position of observing our colleagues and their churches. We can learn from them of what is working and needs to be tweaked. Let's continue to pray for them.

Our Bishop Robert Schnase shared a video yesterday and commended an article to us as well and he agrees that we need to proceed with faith, care and caution. And, we will share those links with you.

This is not forever and we are seeing so many blessings. But I know it's difficult. Thank you for continuing to keep our ministries so strong with your prayers, your presence at our online services, your generous gifts, your continued service and your powerful witness. Please know that in addition to offering online worship, our church staff is hard at work in continuing to minister to the church and the community.

We are also making plans to keep you safe when we are able to gather again.

God bless you! Pastor Barbara, your Staff and your Leadership Council