

Dear Friends,

I want to express my gratitude for your flexibility and patience over these last three months. None of us expected a global pandemic, and yet SAPC members and friends rose to the occasion. You checked in with friends. You stayed safe.

You were also patient with the inevitable technical difficulties of Zoom church. Your humor, acceptance, and understanding were so important as we struggled to create a new way to worship together.

Connecticut is currently re-opening its economy, but the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Like everyone else, SAPC must find new ways to live with the coronavirus, while keeping ourselves and each other safe. To that end, I recently emailed you a survey question regarding outdoor worship. Results were mixed, but mostly in favor. The Session discussed these results when we met last week.

We looked closely at the logistics of holding an outdoor service, and in doing so we recognized several obstacles. We don't have a sound system that can adequately compete with traffic and other outside noises. We don't have a way to easily extend our wi-fi network so we can stream the service online for those not able to attend. And we don't have the resources to purchase the equipment we would need.

So that's the bad news: *We will not be holding an outdoor worship service.*

*But there is good news.* The Session did not give up, and upon further discussion, we realized that, with careful planning, we do have the capability to safely worship together *indoors*. *So I am happy to announce that SAPC will re-open on June 28 with a Welcome Back service in the sanctuary at 10 a.m.*

*And that's where you come in.*

We still need your patience and flexibility because worship will look very different from the last time we gathered. Below, you'll find a brief summary of what you can expect. This is only an overview; you'll receive more detailed information from Karen Eisenbeiser and Tim Evers in the weeks to come.

- SAPC's re-opening does not mean that the COVID-19 risks have subsided; the virus is still very much a danger. Therefore, if you are sick or have been in contact with anyone who is sick, if you are elderly or in contact with elderly family or friends, or if you have any health conditions that put you at greater risk, we ask you to stay home and stay safe.
- SAPC will continue to observe social distancing. We will continue to observe the 6 foot distance, which means we will not be greeting one another with handshakes or hugs. Ushers will direct arrival and dismissal so we can avoid crowding. We also ask you to space out your vehicles and leave every other parking spot empty.
- SAPC will follow CDC guidelines. We will ask worshippers to wear a mask and gloves. Due to the respiratory nature of COVID-19, we will not sing during the service. We will take measures to eliminate surface transmission. We will have a limited number of printed bulletins and encourage you to use your own personal mobile devices instead. We will not have coffee hour.
- SAPC may also close again. If reopening causes anyone to get sick, or if we are required to do so, we will return to distance worship over Zoom.

Friends, we have much to be grateful for. We have a resilient community that wants to worship and be together—whether indoors, outdoors, or online. We have the wherewithal to work together and pool our knowledge so we can figure out how to continue being the church during these unprecedented times. So if you haven't done so in awhile, I encourage you to reach out and call a fellow member on the phone or send a text. We will continue to be with each other, however we can.

Be well and God bless,

Pastor Jason

Questions about the June 28 Worship Service? Here is a list of our re-entry working groups.

- Worship: Jean Degroothe and Dale Green
- Communications: Karen Eisenbeiser and Tim Evers
- Property and Sanitizing: Joe Jackson and Jeff Snider
- Traffic and Pedestrian Control: Bill Smith, Steve Jesse, and Dave Gaiewski