

Dear Friends,

As some of you may have heard, Gov. Kate Brown approved Lincoln County's application to begin the reopening process. There is still much to be determined about how this will change life here in Lincoln City, but we did want to tell you how it will and will not affect Chapel by the Sea.

Churches fall under "gatherings" in the Governor's orders. In phase 1, gatherings are restricted to 25 or less people and with 6 ft social-distancing requirements. Because we have far more than 25 in worship and managing the possible scenarios would not be safe or thoughtful, we will not reopen during phase 1. Phase 2 is expected to allow for larger gatherings. The soonest the county could be approved for phase 2 is early June.

In a meeting yesterday, your Session spent a great deal of time in study and conversation about how to move forward for Chapel by the Sea. They have made plans for the safe and thoughtful opening of the building and in-person activities. (*below are some of the specific actions taken*)

We are actively preparing now for being together in our beautiful sanctuary. Supplies are being purchased, rooms are being modified, people are being trained ~ so that when we gather, we do so in love; love that is fiercely protective of the most vulnerable among us. For that to happen safely and thoughtfully, some things will need to change.

- Moving furniture to accommodate social distancing.
- Requirement for everyone to wear masks.
- Storage of printed material which will not be used for the coming months (hymnals, Bibles, bulletins).
- Limitation of singing (choir and congregation).
- No coffee hour
- Rigorous cleaning protocols

Oh, this does sound so "rulish" and sterile right at the moment when we so want to be together and hug and pass the peace and sing a joyous *hallelujah* that raises the roof! But, it seems, the shape that love takes in this day, is with distance, with restraint, with protection – like a mother hen guarding her chicks. It seems that Jesus is offering us a season, not of exuberance, but of breathing, quieting, of self-control and of trust when the way seems covered in a mist of uncertainty. It is fitting that the passage for our Session devotions yesterday was:

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ² Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. *1 Peter 5:1-4*

For now, we will continue to hold worship on-line, via FaceBook and Zoom. We will continue to be held together by the Spirit of God.

In love and service,

Your elders

Some points of a CBTS Re-opening Plan

Each program requires consideration, but when we open the building again, we will:

Worship – resume worship in the following manner, when permitted.

In the sanctuary (unless attendance too high for social distancing, in which case in the Fellowship hall)

All in attendance required to wear face mask. (Ask that people their own and have few on hand for those who forget or are visitors).

TEMPORARILY modify liturgy: adjust Passing of the peace and Communion, eliminate as many contact surfaces as possible, move furniture to allow for distancing and flexibility, modify singing practices.

PERMANENTLY - offer on-line worship, either recorded or live feed.

Coffee Hour- while virus is actively circulating in the community, eliminate coffee hour. Social distancing is too hard to monitor and so many surfaces touched by many people (coffee pot handles). There could be occasional social time in the parking lot, as weather allows

Spacing - Practice forms of social distancing, including maintaining 6ft of distance between people for all activities, restrict use of small rooms, change all bathrooms to single person use, direct movement in one-way direction (entrance and exits).

Cleaning – Provide for enhanced cleaning procedures before and after activities.

Purchase/order extra cleaning supplies.

Have cleaning kits placed in commonly used spaces (sanctuary, kitchen, bathrooms, office, Fellowship hall)

Designate people to ensure cleaning before and after each activity.