



June 30, 2020

Greetings to our wonderful Spring Valley Presbyterian Church family,

It's been a while since we've seen each other face-to-face as the Coronavirus has certainly changed all of our lives. Spring Valley Presbyterian Church has been following the mandates and recommendations of the state of South Carolina, the White House's Opening Up America Again guidance and information from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) during this time. Although the church has remained "closed" as far as person-to-person meetings, our staff and members have remained active creating online worship services, Zoom meetings of the Session and committees, Sunday School classes and Youth Group activities.

But sadly, we have not been together in-person as a congregation since March, and many of you are wondering when SVPC will re-open; when will we be able to worship together as a group in our church? Understanding the importance of this decision, the Session created a task force on reopening the church to work on strategies to keep our church family healthy and safe while exploring ways to worship together. This group met many times and prayerfully considered various options as they developed their plans for the next few weeks. In this letter, we would like to share with you the plans for reopening SVPC.

The formal Mission of the Task Force was to develop guidance and direction addressing the physical health and safety requirements for the eventual reopening of church programs, which include the necessary steps to accomplish this goal and establish a framework and timeline to do so.

Through much study and careful consideration of available medical information, the Task Force suggested, and the Session approved a three-phase approach to opening our church.

- Phase 1—Outdoor Worship, no sooner than July 5, 2020
- Phase 2—Inside Worship with Restrictions, no sooner than August 2
- Phase 3—Inside Worship with Limited Restrictions, no sooner than September 13

At this moment, we cannot give you definite dates for the beginning of all phases. We can give you the above goals for our timeline, but ultimately we will be guided by the news concerning the virus spread in our community. The most important objective is to do everything possible to keep our congregation safe and healthy and to make recommendations based on the best medical evidence available to us.

In this letter, we will describe our plans for Phase 1 Outdoor Worship and hope that many of you will be able to join in our new style of Worship. However, our Wednesday evening recording of our online service will continue and be available for those who may not feel comfortable attending the Outdoor Worship Service.

Key Points:

- Two services are available Sunday mornings on the church lawn in the area between the Sanctuary and the Christian Education Building.
- The number of participants will be limited and those who wish to attend must sign up online.
- Social distancing will be maintained—each family unit will sit together in a reserved spot on the church lawn.
- Masks must be worn—all are encouraged to bring a mask, but masks will be available for those who may need one.
- Participants should bring suitable outdoor chairs.
- Dress will be casual—it may be hot.
- Members who are At-Risk are discouraged from attending the service on the lawn but may wish to remain in their cars and listen to the service via a localized FM Broadcast. Please sign up online for a parking spot.
- Although the Praise Band will perform, we ask that the congregation enjoy the music but refrain from singing along.

More information on the specifics of the Outdoor service follow this letter and information about Phase 2 and Phase 3 will be distributed to the congregation closer to the time of openings.

If you have the time to volunteer, we could use your assistance. Marking the lawn, directing congregants to their assigned areas and putting away metal chairs after the service are a few of the tasks that will need to be performed each Sunday. Please contact a member of the Task Force if you are available.

For those who feel comfortable attending an outside service, we so look forward to seeing you. Please let us know if you have any comments or ideas that may be helpful to us as we navigate the future strategies of determining the best way to worship. Despite the many uncertainties we face, there is one certainty . . . God is with us, no matter how difficult or frightening the situation. God surrounds us with His love—no matter our physical location. God will give us strength to face these times.

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.” Psalm 46:1-3

May God bless us and keep us safe,

The Session of Spring Valley Presbyterian Church

Members of the Task Force: Joel Atkinson, Tim Bostick, Robin Brackett, Chip Collins, Brent Dillon, Jack Heinsohn, James McCallum, Chris McMenemy, Normand St. Onge, Jennifer Othersen, Ruth Roberts

**Reopening Spring Valley Presbyterian Church for Outside Worship
Facts/Instructions for SVPC Congregation
First Service 7/5/2020—Updated Service Times 9/28/20**

Two Sunday Services are Available

- Outside Worship will be in the front of the main Sanctuary doors
- 8:30am-9am; & 10:00am-10:30am
- If needed, a third service will be added.

Reservations for Services

- Members should sign up for the service they wish to attend using the online form at www.svpc.org. It is important to watch the video on the signup form and confirm that you read this information as well. Feel free to invite non-members to the service. If you DO NOT have computer access, please contact the church office at (803) 788-3589. If you don't sign up by Saturday at 7PM, we are happy to have you for service on Sunday, but we ask that you stay in your car and listen to our FM broadcast.
- Attendees will be assigned a seating area for the service
- If applicable, members will sit together as a family unit.
- Members should bring outdoor chairs (or a blanket if you prefer sitting on the grass).
- Some members may prefer to stay in their cars and listen to the service via FM Broadcast channel, 87.7. You must be at the church to receive this signal as it is a localized signal that will reach only a portion of our parking lot. At-Risk Members are encouraged to stay in their cars during the service. Spaces are limited for parking and you will need to sign up to reserve a parking space.
- No nursery will be provided for these services.

Seating at the Service

- Ushers in the parking lot will direct members to parking spots
- Ushers will direct each family unit to their assigned section
- Members should stay within their assigned section throughout the service
- After the service, ushers will dismiss family units individually to allow for social distancing

Expectations of Members attending the Service

- Social Distance, Social Distance, Social Distance! Those attending the service will be seated at least six feet from others. When waiting to be seated, please stand at least six feet behind the nearest group. Sidewalks will be marked with six-foot segments.
- Please no hugging or handshaking. It's okay to wave and call out greetings!
- Wear Masks. For your safety we require you to wear a mask. If you have a mask, please bring it! If you need a mask, one will be provided.
- The Praise Band will perform, but please listen to their beautiful music and refrain from singing along.

Other Service Notes

- Bulletins will not be available. Please print a copy of the bulletin or bring an electronic version to view on your phone or iPad. You will be able to view them at www.svpc.org (click the "Bulletins" button)
- Restrooms off of the Outreach Room are available for emergency use only.
- Dress is casual and weather appropriate.

- Feel free to bring snacks or drinks to the service.
- In case of heavy rain or a thunderstorm, the service will be canceled. Check the church website for weather announcements.
- Although much thought and consideration has gone into the plans for these services, please be patient. It is likely we will learn more about the virus that could cause changes to the way we conduct the services, and as we actually meet together, we may find better ways to worship together.

At-Risk Members

The CDC states that people of older age and people having serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Spring Valley Presbyterian Church hopes to keep our At-Risk Members safe and so recommends that At-Risk Members either stay inside their cars, listening to the service via FM Broadcast or worship at home via the online worship link. At-Risk persons are defined by the CDC as those may have the following characteristics:

- People 65 years and older
- People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled.
- Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- Serious heart conditions
- Immuno-compromised, such as those in cancer treatment, smokers, bone marrow or organ transplants, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or Aids, prolonged use of corticosteroids & other immune weakening medications
- People with severe obesity (BMI of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease

COVID Symptoms

If you have any of the following symptoms as listed by the CDC, please stay home and contact your primary care physicians for further instructions:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or Body Aches
- Unusual Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore Throat
- Congestion or runny nose, not due to seasonal allergies
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Also, if you have been recently tested for COVID, please stay at home until you have received the results of your test. If you have been in close contact with someone who has recently received a positive COVID test, please stay at home for 14 days after exposure to that person. If you test positive for COVID-19 after the service, contact a pastor or member of the task force. If someone at the service you attended tests positive afterwards, you will be contacted.