

LEVERINGTON

CHURCH

Dear fellow Leveringtonites,

3/8/2021

This has been an incredibly long twelve months, an incredibly long slog for many of us. Some of us have lost loved ones or been deeply sick ourselves. Most of us have wrestled with frustration, boredom, anger, depression, and even hopelessness. Some of us feel guilt because we think if we were real people of faith we would not feel the things we feel. But our Savior wept when facing death. He experienced anguish due to his situation. This is what it means when we say he was both fully God AND fully man. To have deep concerns and deep emotions is to be human!

The long winter of COVID is now heading towards Spring and new opportunities are growing around us like the first flowers pushing through the ice! We are not completely out of the woods, but we are well on our way. Please see the back for why we are proceeding towards in-person worship at this time.

HERE IS OUR SCHEDULE FOR RETURNING TO IN-PERSON WORSHIP at 10:30 AM!

Date	Public Worship	Children's Program (Nursery through 5 th grade)
Sunday 3/21	✓	
Sunday 3/28	✓	✓
Sunday 4/4 EASTER (Reservations Required)	✓	✓

Please see the back for expectations and procedures for attending in-person worship. Online worship will still be available starting at 10:30 am, and can also be watched any time after that. The children's online program will still be available at 11:30 am. If you watch online make sure to subscribe to our new YouTube channel as explained during the service. We don't know exactly how things will evolve, but to begin with, the 10:30 service will be a bit of a hybrid of our 9:30 and 11:00 services. With the kick-off of in-person worship we will be starting a new chapter by chapter study of the gospel of Matthew. Easter will include some traditional music, cello and trumpet. Note, you must pre-register to attend Easter morning as it is likely we will run out of spots. To register, either go to our website and click on Easter, or call the office at 215-482-0293 and leave a message, be sure to leave your phone number so we can confirm with you. Spots will be saved on a first come, first served basis.

I am thankful for all of you who joined us for Ash Wednesday, the Lenten Devotional, and/or the 40 day challenge. In the next several weeks, we will be emailing you with Zoom opportunities for Holy Week. This whole year has felt a bit like a Lenten fast, and I pray that even in the midst of your own challenges you have felt the closeness of the Lord. A scripture that has been pivotal to me in these times is:

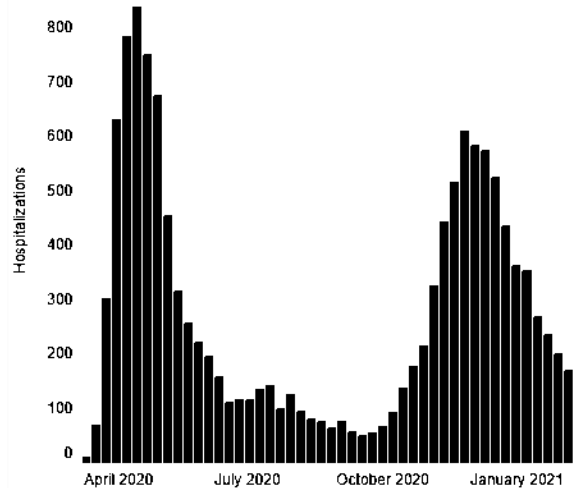
**I trust in you, O LORD;
I say, "You are my God."
My times are in your hands;**
Psalm 31:14-15

That Psalm concludes: "Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD." This is both my challenge and my prayer for each one of you. We are almost through this. Many of us will begin seeing each other in person soon. God has you in his hands. Brighter days are coming. Take heart, for the King loves you, and will walk through these days with you!

Your brother in Christ,
Langdon Palmer, Pastor

ON WHAT TRENDS ARE WE BASING OUR DECISION FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP ON?

While no metric can definitively give us the final word on how much risk to our selves and our neighbors is present in a given social gathering, our church leadership chose **“Weekly hospitalizations due to COVID in Philadelphia”**¹ as a proxy for both how pervasive/serious the threat actually was AND for an indication of how close we were to overwhelming the health care system in our local area. We picked 100 new COVID hospitalizations a week² as a ball park indicator of a relatively improved situation and reduced risk. This chart paints very different pictures of what our situation was in late November compared to where we are now. Ever increasing vaccine supply, improving medical therapies and growing herd immunity all point towards continued drop in statistical risk of attending church with our safety procedures in place.



WHAT WILL IN-PERSON CHURCH BE LIKE AND WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS?

As we start, the 10:30 worship service will contain some components of both our 9:30 and 11:00 services. When you arrive at church, proceed to the parking lot entrance to the sanctuary. You will see a sign that says *“In order to love our neighbors well, please proceed only if you:*

- Have a **mask** - and agree to wear it the entire time you are in the building – even while singing.
- Have **no cold or flu symptoms** - (including fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, runny nose, etc.)
- Will make every effort to maintain **social distancing** of 6 ft or greater
- Have not tested positive for COVID within the last 14 days
- Are comfortable with signing in - (providing your name and contact info for purposes of contact tracing)
- Are comfortable with leaders up front not wearing masks - when upfront.
- Agree not to hold Leverington Presbyterian Church liable should you contract COVID.”

You should not attend public worship unless you agree to abide by all the above policies. The sanctuary itself will be sanitized prior to worship. Ventilation will ensure fresh air coming in at face level. A greeter outside will take your temperature and check you in. Seating will be available only in marked pews. Nothing will be handled or exchanged during the service – no bulletin, holding hands, passing of the collection plates, etc. Everything will be projected and donation boxes will be in the back. We ask that you do not congregate in the building, rather greet your friends in the parking lot before or after the service. These steps will ensure that the widest range of our congregation will feel comfortable returning to public worship! Let’s love one another well!

If you have any questions about in-person worship, please contact Lora Gery at Lora@levpres.org. If you have any questions about the nursery or Children’s Ministry, please contact Elder Joan Schillinger at Jschi3338@msn.com.

¹ SOURCE: <https://www.phila.gov/programs/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/testing-and-data/>

² Any choice of measurement can be critiqued, but I felt by keeping our eye on one metric over time, we were at least more likely to make our decision based on actual trends rather than on an impulsive knee-jerk reaction.