



October 25, 2020

Congregation Member:

The COVID-19 Virus turned our world upside down in March. It brought with it isolation, fear, and challenges, especially to those who the CDC defined as “high risk”. On the opposite end of the spectrum it brought on a feeling of constriction for those who feel it is not a matter of if, but when, and life must be lived normally.

Throughout the pandemic, SAPC’s Session prayerfully and continually tried to discern the best course to follow to keep our congregation safe and yet still hold church to worship our Lord. A task that every church has undertaken. The Session felt it was best to follow the recommendations of the CDC and established a COVID Task Force charged with evaluating the continually evolving CDC guidelines and subsequently making recommendations on the use of SAPC facilities, programs, and worship in alignment with these guidelines. Needless to say, this has been very challenging!

Throughout it all the Session has held worship of our Lord and the health of our Congregation as the top priorities. The purpose of this letter is to let the SAPC members know the steps that have been taken to date, where we are now, and how we are moving forward in the future.

What steps have been taken?

Sanctuary

- Based on CDC guidelines, the maximum capacity 80 people
- The ventilation system has been modified to provide additional airflow in the sanctuary.
- Pews have been marked for social distancing. Each end of the pew is marked with 4 ft of seating area. If more than 4ft is used on one in, the other end of the pew will not be occupied. Every other pew is roped off. Pews are also used to provide distancing when entering and exiting the sanctuary.
- Attendees can sit with anyone they would like to sit with, at their own risk, but those arrangements need to be established between the attendees before entering the sanctuary. No one is to sit within 6 ft of someone else without prior arrangements.
- Hand sanitizer is in the narthex and in each pew
- Masks are available for those entering without a mask

Worship

- Everyone is asked to register so that there will be a record of those in attendance so that they can be notified in the event someone attending is found to test positive.
- Ushers sign in the attendees as they arrive for the service. This action supports social distancing by allowing members to proceed directly to their seats without having to wait in line, as would be the case if each individual signed in.
- All hymnals, bibles, and papers have been removed from the pew so that they do not have to be sanitized following each service. However, the words to the hymns are provided in the bulletin and everyone is encouraged to bring their own bible.
- Phillip Hare and Scott Chapple will be positioned at least 20 ft from any congregation member and will sing at the 11:00 a.m. service as they do for the 8:45a.m. service.
- All in attendance are asked to wear face covering. To date, no one has entered service without face covering.
- Communion Sunday's will use prepackaged individual communion cups.
- Sanitization is performed in between services with a CDC approved disinfectant.

Family Life Center

- The gym capacity is set for 60 people
- 20 tables have been set up and spaced in a manner to support social distancing, including consideration of the placement of the chairs and the fact that attendees may lean back in their seats.
- Each table is set with hand sanitizer and a mask
- When seated and thence properly socially distanced, masks are allowed to be removed.

Masks are to be worn when not seated.

- Everyone is asked to sign in so that there will be a record of who is in attendance, again, in case notifications need to be made.

Kindergarten

- Preschool is not using the Sanctuary or the Family Life Center Gym. This is to contain any contamination of any outbreak that may occur.
- They are allowed to use the second-floor classrooms in the FLC, and these rooms are sanitized after use.
- They are allowed to use the library, and it too is sanitized after use
- Kindergarten has their own set of guidelines vetted by the COVID Task Force and approved by the session.

On campus, Outdoor activities

- On campus outdoor activities such as Wednesday evening services, youth events, etc.... follow the CDC protocols of social distancing and wearing masks when social distancing cannot be maintained.

For precaution and out of respect for fellow members and the church staff, members are asked to stay home if they are not feeling well, no matter the symptom(s) they are experiencing.

So, what if someone reports that they have tested positive for COVID-19? According to the CDC guidelines, anyone that has tested positive should notify the church if they were on the premises or attended a service or church-sanctioned event within 48 hours of testing positive or being symptomatic. A notification will go out to the registered attendees of that event or service.

If someone who has been on the church premises or at a church sanctioned event learns that they have been in contact with an individual that has tested positive, they are asked to call the office to report this information and to self-isolate according to CDC guidelines. This would require the individual to stay away from the church premises or church events for 14 days from the date of contact. The CDC does not require a notification to be given unless the individual becomes symptomatic or tests positive.

I hope that in reading this letter you understand the seriousness and deliberateness with which the Session and COVID Task Force have acted in order to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transfer. I also hope this answers any questions that you may have concerning measures taken.

The Session would like to welcome you back to the sanctuary when you are ready. If you have any comments or recommendations you would like to make, please contact me at clerkkellysapc@gmail.com and I will relay them to the Session and the COVID Task Force.

Please remember that Live On-Line Service will continue at 8:45 every Sunday. A limited Sunday School program is also being conducted by Zoom. Please see the church's website at www.southaiken.org for more detail concerning On Line Worship and Programs.

Please know that the COVID Task Force will remain in place, and as conditions and CDC guidelines change, SAPC will continue to evaluated and adjust as necessary to maintain a reduced risk level for our Congregants. Let us all pray that the pandemic continues to subside.

In Christ,

Kelly Frontroth
Clerk of Session