

October 23, 2020

Operations & COVID-19 Update #10

The Council met on Monday, October 19th. A key topic of conversation was our gradual re-opening process. Beginning October 1st, we began reopening for groups up to 25 in our Fellowship Hall. So far we have been pleased with how the groups have embraced the safety guidelines and feel good about our ability to provide a safe space for small groups to gather. The Council also reviewed the 100+ responses from the congregation to the in-person worship survey. This feedback was invaluable in helping us understand the level of comfortability in returning to worship.

Earlier in October, the Council granted a special exception for a wedding ceremony to be held at Grace and considered it a good test for our safety protocols. Unfortunately, we later learned that one of the guests was contagious with COVID-19 while attending the wedding. We have been working with the Health Department to coordinate contact tracing over the past week and are happy to report that, so far, none of the local residents who attended the wedding have tested positive for COVID-19. But, this experience has brought a heightened sense of concern on the part of the Council and triggered a review of all of our safety protocols for larger gatherings.

One of the main issues that came to light as a result of this experience is that we are going to need a team of 6-8 people who can serve as Ushers and safety monitors for worship services. Therefore, the Council voted to charter a Safety Task Force and are looking for folks who would be willing to volunteer. The primary function of this group would be to help on Sunday mornings with getting people in and out of the building safely, managing any issues that might arise during the the worship service, and, if we do multiple worship services, to clean and sanitize the building in-between services. If you are interested in participating in this group, please contact Pastor Steve (gracelutheranpastor@gmail.com).

It is with that in mind that the Council is going to extend the suspension of in-person worship. This will give us time to review our protocols and established the Safety Task Force. The Council will meet on November 16th to discuss next steps. We would like to thank everyone for your patience and prayers as we continue through this pandemic and try to ensure that we are doing everything we can to keep each other and our community safe.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Pastor Steve or Mary Ballard.