

[RE]GATHERING EXPECTATIONS

WHAT WE'RE ASKING OF YOU

1. **Love Your Neighbor.** Jesus calls us to two great pursuits. The love of God & the love of our neighbor. This should mean that we will refuse to use a worship gathering, the people in them, or the expectations we've listed here as a means of self-service or posturing over others.

'And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." - Mark 12:30-31

There are diverse beliefs about current events, strong convictions about masks, distancing and the virus itself. Love for God & love for our neighbor means that we will not use them to wound or harm. Guilt & shame have no place here. The call to love means that we can lay aside our opinions for the sake of one another.

2. **Demonstrate personal responsibility.** Practice safe personal hygiene (hand washing/sanitizer stations), practice social distancing (sit at the provided tables with your family group, exit the building quickly after the gathering, etc.), and wear a mask as required (CDC Considerations for Communities of Faith). **Stay home if you're not feeling well**, even if you've not been diagnosed with COVID-19. People in high-risk categories should exercise caution.
3. **Serve with heart and hand.** As always, we hope our members and regular attenders are gracious hosts for those who show up on Sundays. While it may feel like there's a lot more to be mindful of, the most important thing we can keep top-of-mind is one another - those you haven't seen for awhile *and* any new guests who decide to visit. Pitch in when and where you can as missionary servants.

WHAT WE'RE COMMITTING TO YOU

1. **Plenty of sanitizer and supplies.** We'll have sanitation stations around the building with hand sanitizer, masks, and more for you to use; located at the entrance/exits and restrooms
2. **Seating to serve.** The chair arrangement will look different than usual as we try our best to adapt our space for reasonable social distancing during our gatherings. Families/individuals who are comfortable sitting next to one another should sit together at one of the table settings. We ask that you please sit at the tables and not in the stadium seating; this will leave those seats for late arrivers and as overflow if needed.
3. **Continued Livestream.** Not only will we continue to livestream our Sunday gatherings, but we will continue to increase the *quality* of those livestreams to better serve those who are unable - or who choose not - to gather in-person. We are in need of volunteers for this new ministry and encourage those interested to contact Pastor Jerry or Kendall.
4. **Follow the Son | Walk with People | Love our City.** Times are crazy and COVID-19 has made some obstacles to the way we go about pursuing the mission of the church, but we continue by the Spirit, through the Son, to the glory of the Father. The Journey Fellowship has continued - and *will* continue - to be committed to making disciples who make disciples. We'll continue to gather together to be built up as disciples under the Word, and we'll continue to scatter as servants and missionaries to build the kingdom. Methods may change, but our passion for the Gospel will not.

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WHAT ABOUT KIDS?

- **We will not be offering JOURNEY KIDS (kids' discipleship) for now.** This means that everyone (kids included) will remain in the main gathering space. We will continue to provide at home options/suggestions both on our website and in our APP so families can continue to faithfully disciple their kids.
- **Noisy and active children are expected.** We want you and your kids to be with us. You do not need to be embarrassed by the reality that kids are kids. They ask questions, move around and even cry from time to time. That church is family, isn't just a slogan, it is who we are. We love all of Journey even the smallest and noisiest of us.
- **We will offer some coloring/activity materials for our preschool/elementary students.** You may want to also bring along things that will keep their hands busy. And we will continue to include a children's story time during our gathering.
- **This is temporary.** Our current intention is that we will be resuming children in classrooms in September. We will be following the guidelines/timeline of our school system.

HOW LONG WILL THESE ACCOMMODATIONS LAST?

- **We have no idea.** As we continue striving to serve and lead responsibly in accordance with federal, state, and local recommendations and guidelines, we will evaluate month-to-month and communicate changes as needed. We have all seen how quickly things can change, so it would be irresponsible to give you a complete firm timeline when we can't possibly know what the coming weeks and months might bring!
- **We are paying attention to several sources of information.** These have sway over our plans.
 - Changes to federal, state, or local recommendations and guidelines that impact us directly.
 - In particular this means: Delaware General Health District, ODH & CDC
 - Increased evidence of COVID-19 transmission in our community and within The Journey Fellowship.
- **We are responsible for doing what's best for The Journey Fellowship.** Every local church will have to make decisions based on what they think is best for their people. Just as every congregation looks different, so will every plan moving forward. Our responsibility isn't to do what other churches are doing. It's not to simply do whatever is lawful without regard for what's wise. It's not to rush back to reclaim what feels familiar, nor is it to let the presence of fear determine our course of action.

Thanks for your continued grace as we navigate uncharted waters together. Don't hesitate to reach out if you need help, want clarification, or have any concerns.