

Hello Family of Believers!

Pastor Koglin, our staff, Transition Team and Elders want to thank you for praying for us, being patient with us, and partnering with us in this challenging season! Thanks for meeting the many changes with grace and with "Eyes on Jesus!" Today we want to give you an update on singing.

Singing is something God desires and encourages us to do because it strengthens, teaches, and proclaims our faith (Ephesians 5:15-20, Colossians 3:15-17, Psalm 90:14, Psalm 5:11, Psalm 33:1-3, Psalm 63:7). God also desires for us to love our neighbor and to honor those leaders He has given us who are trying to manage this health crisis. In this season this meant to "refrain" from congregational singing for a time. As our last Children's Message reminded us – let us be thankful!

We love to sing! Thank you, God, that this season of refraining from singing has taught us to never take it for granted again and built our longing to sing together even more! We love music that teaches the faith! Thank you, God, for the many ways you have blessed us with music in this season to strengthen our faith! Here is a note from our DPM, April.

Praise God that music has continued to share the Gospel during this time. We have been blessed that many have been so dedicated and willing to share music through technology! Redeemer has had the joy of still "seeing" people as they have shared music that has fed our souls with God's Word. Choirs have met via zoom to stay connected and we have had the joy to welcome in singers/players from outside of Rochester! From Sounds of Praise and Instruments of Praise to Cherub choir and Alleluia Singers to Angelic chimes playing the colorful pitched boom whacker instruments, we have been blessed! Although we have all experienced music differently, we can be extremely thankful that music has still shared the Gospel. I thank so many who have journeyed through these tough times with me and have been willing to try things differently. - April

We are now taking steps to bring back congregational singing which will start Holy Week. As we take these steps it is important for this to be a process of incremental change. Week one will not start as it was before. Please be patient with us and pray for us as we care for the multiple comfort levels in this conversation. Here are the conclusions from our Transition Team.

We are ready to cautiously reintroduce congregational singing into our worship services. Although the risk of becoming infected by attendance at a worship service will never be zero and therefore never completely safe, we feel that the risk has been reduced low enough for us to move forward.

A. Our church is prepared for the following reasons:

- a. Our members have shown excellent compliance with mask use when in the facility.**
- b. Social distancing practices have been followed.**
 - i. Reduced the number of people able to meet in the sanctuary and chapel.
 - ii. Seating arrangement maintains at least 6 feet of distance between households.
 - iii. Socializing has been limited within the facility before and after services.
- c. Hygienic practices are in place.**
 - i. Pews and common areas are cleaned and sanitized after each service.
 - ii. Hand sanitizer dispensers are readily accessible throughout the facility and their use has been strongly encouraged.
- d. Length of worship services has been reduced to minimize group contact time.**

- e. Substantial improvement in the ventilation system has been completed** (see the separate document by Michael Harvey for details).
 - i. Installation of a damper system to bring fresh air into the sanctuary and chapel when the outside temperature allows its use.
 - ii. Upgraded many of the filters in the HVAC system for better capture of small particles, including virus.
 - iii. Addition of bipolar ionization technology to the current HVAC system to remove potentially infectious particles from the air.
 - iv. Purchase of multiple portable air purifiers with HEPA filters, placed around the sanctuary and chapel to further enhance air quality.
- B. There have been significant changes occurring in the community which are reducing risk of infection (while aware of potential increase in spread with variants of the virus emerging elsewhere).**
 - a. **Decline in the number of cases in the community.**
 - b. **More people are being vaccinated.**
- C. THEREFORE, the Transition Team is recommending to the Elders:**
 - a. **Approve a subgroup of Transition Team members and staff to develop a plan for increased congregational singing beginning with Holy Week and Easter, and then ongoing as conditions allow.**

If you want to read the full document that lays out all the important medical data to take into consideration – [CLICK HERE](#).

If you want to read and understand more about our ventilation upgrades, Michael Harvey has written a great summary. Simply [CLICK HERE](#).

Again, thank you for your prayers, patience, and partnership! But let us not let our guard down. Distancing, masking, and staying away when you feel ill are still great strategies. It is because our Family of Believers has faithfully practiced these that we can gradually open up and do more. Thank you!

As always, it is up to each individual and family to assess their own risk tolerance for gathering and to make the decision that is best for them.

Pastor Koglin would like to give thanks to the Transition Team who have used medical data, the gifts God has given them and practical steps to care for our Family of Believers in this hard season. God is working through them! Masking, distancing, ventilation, and vaccines are all wonderful tools in this season. In the end, let us remember that it is wise to use these tools and give Him thanks for them, but our trust is not in these worldly things! Our trust is in our God who keeps us safe eternally through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus our Lord and Savior. Eyes on Him! (Psalm 4:8, Psalm 27:1, Proverbs 18:10, Proverbs 29:25, Matthew 6:33-34, 1 Corinthians 15, Revelation 2:10)! Lift up our eyes and know our help comes from Him (Psalm 121:1)!

Blessings,

The Transition Team and the Board of Elders