

# ***In-Person Worship!!***

*Sisters and brothers in Christ,*

*Three weeks ago, we made the decision to soft-open our worship services. We invited the church council, Synod Parish Deacons, staff, and music ministry teams and their households to join us for worship on Sunday mornings to test out proposed guidelines for in-person worship. From their valuable input, we have been able to determine the best practices to insure everyone's safety during worship. In addition, we have received countless phone calls, emails, notes, and in person discussions about your desires for our next steps. We will tell you that there is no consensus for action.*

*After much prayer, sleepless nights, and deep discussions by the Mutual Ministry team and the Church Council, we have decided to enter into Phase One of re-opening to in-person worship. Guiding our decision were the following:*

- 1. The safety of all. There is no way to just open the doors and be back to normal. There is also no way to ensure that everyone who enters the church is virus free. Our goal must be to do everything we can to make the space safe for worshippers, pastors, and worship leaders. We recognize that there are extreme beliefs as to what is right and what is wrong in this. However, our goal is to err on the side of caution. We are not willing to knowingly expose anyone.*
- 2. Be flexible in our plan. While Florida is in a state of re-opening, it is also experiencing a spike in cases along with an increase in hospital admissions. Watching this trend is uneasy. We need to be flexible in whatever decision we make so that we can respond to any changes in government guidelines. We want to be part of a solution that gets us all back to full worship rather than part of the problem. Starting slow and watching trends is very important at this time.*
- 3. The results of our two-week "soft opening". During those two weeks, we learned the following:
  - a. The guidelines we put in place are easy to follow and effective.*
  - b. We need a minimum of 5 volunteers for each worship service.**

- c. *If the church is to be used for more than one service, the pews, bathrooms, and common areas need to be cleaned and disinfected before the next service. This requires a team of at least 4 people and takes about 15-30 minutes to do correctly.*
- d. *A very high number of late service attendees have expressed a desire to remain at home watching on Facebook Live. For example, we invited the same number of people to the soft opening for each service. We averaged 24 at the 9am service and only 10 at the 1030am service.*

*So what does Phase One look like? We will be offering one in-person worship service each week and that will be at 9am. Both the 9am and 1030am service will be broadcast live on Facebook and available later in the day on Facebook and our Holy Trinity Web page.*

*Here are the guidelines for in-person worship recognizing that we will all be in a closed space for one hour:*

1. *You must call ahead to reserve a spot for your household. Seating is limited to 60 households. This can be done by calling the church office at 941.625.5262 or emailing the church at [Office@htlchurch.org](mailto:Office@htlchurch.org) **Please reserve your space by noon Saturday. You must receive a confirmation from the office to ensure there is enough space.***
2. *If you are sick or even slightly question your health that day, please stay home and worship with us on line.*
3. *Temperatures will be taken at the Narthex doors. Anyone with a temperature of over 100.4 will not be allowed in.*
4. *The doors will be open at 8:30am and your name will be checked off the list.*
5. *Everyone entering must wear a facemask as a sign of love for everyone attending. Masks will be available if you forget yours.*
6. *Communion for your household must be picked up in the Narthex prior to entering worship.*
7. *Offerings must be placed by you into the offering plates at the sanctuary doors.*

8. *Please sit in the seat you are directed to and ensure that there is 6 feet spacing between your household and pew mates.*
9. *When leaving worship, please follow the direction of the ushers to make sure that we aren't clustering. If you want to visit with someone else, please do so in the parking lot.*
10. *Hand sanitizer is available when you enter and leave the church as well as in each pew.*

*Council has voted to enact Phase One beginning **THIS SUNDAY – JUNE 21<sup>st</sup>**. Phase One will last until the council reviews it in August. We realize that this action will not please everyone. Please remember it is our best effort to begin in-person worship and keep everyone safe. We are always looking for ideas to improve. If you have constructive suggestions to help us make worship the best it can be for all members, please do not hesitate to contact us.*

*God's Blessings to each of you,  
Your Pastors and Church Council*

*Email text from Pastors' June 18, 2020*