

May 13, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of The Old Scotch Church,

On Friday, Governor Brown will announce more plans for gradually and safely re-opening Oregon from our months of sheltering in place. The Session and I want to be clear: we will follow the guidelines for what this will mean for our church worship and meetings together.

I'm concerned that the wrong message was sent last week when the Worship and Music Commission asked the contact callers to query those on their calling list about their desire and plans for returning to in-person worship. Any kind of return would include adherence to social-distancing and safety guidelines – and that return would not happen until the church is legally allowed to do so. Our intention in asking about who would be inclined to return was simply to gage the anticipated plans of the congregation.

Returning to in-person worship as a congregation will take planning, preparation, sacrifices, and mutual support. We have mapped out seating options in our sanctuary and downstairs in the fellowship hall with the service live-streamed to there. Our church has an intentionally closed wifi system to protect against hackers, so we do not live-stream to the public. We have about 55 spaces available at the present distancing of 6 feet, which could accommodate about 80 people if couples and families can sit together (right now, guidelines are for *individual* distancing). In addition, we expect that masks will be required, so Chris Macfarlane is spear-heading sewing washable masks to have available for those who don't have them. (If you are willing to help her, please email her at chris@oldscotchchurch.org.) We will need to limit bathroom use to emergencies only. Fellowship time will not include food and drink yet. Hand sanitizing options need to be readily available. Our nursery will not re-open yet.

All of these plans are part of our waiting and watching, while we continue to plan and offer online worship, zoom meetings, and electronic means of connecting. Our staff and leadership are working in a dual world right now. When will changes happen? We don't know yet. We may be experiencing stops and starts to re-connecting personally for months. Maybe we are looking ahead too early – but you know I am a planner!

What I know now is that **Session voted last night at our regular meeting to extend online worship for the Sundays of May 24, 31, and June 7** (a communion Sunday), with the plan to evaluate further Sundays at our next regular Session meeting on June 9. Please continue to pray for our leadership of Session and Deacons as we seek to provide care, nurture, guidance, and worship – all under the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Tracie