

June 19, 2020

Dear Friends,

As you may know, on June 8th the Government of Ontario [announced](#) stage 2 of the province's plan for easing pandemic emergency restrictions. Now [regulations](#) permit social gatherings of up to ten people. They also permit churches to hold worship services if attendance is no more than 30% of the room's capacity and if other rules related to physical distancing are observed. Forty-eight people may meet in our church sanctuary at this time. Its usual capacity is two hundred.

We have been prayerfully and carefully considering how we should proceed at Sunnyside. The pastoral staff, including myself, have discussed this widely with people from across the congregation. The Local Board of Administration has created a subcommittee to work with me on how we transition to full opening. And in an email message last week I invited people to send their comments, including any concerns or advice, to the [Transition Team](#).

We have decided that Sunnyside Wesleyan Church will not be reopening for in-person Sunday morning services until September at the earliest.

Reopening with 30% maximum attendance and adhering to physical distancing rules present significant logistical challenges. (See how one church offers some [comic relief](#) on the subject!) Further, physical distancing rules restrict how people may engage with each other. Many of you have said that returning to Sunday services without close personal contact would be unsatisfying.

Still...there are In-Person Opportunities to Gather

The Church is not the church building, and the Church is not limited to a service on Sunday. Many of you participate in small groups. We encourage small groups to consider meeting in person if all members are comfortable and if they can do so while respecting current physical distancing guidelines. Not everyone feels that they are ready to gather in person and that is fine. But for others this could be an opportunity for personal connection in a responsible way. For conversation about small group gatherings, please reach out to our [Community Life Pastor](#). Our [Youth Pastor](#) will be in touch with families and youth about summer plans. Our [Ministerial Student](#) works with a team to facilitate 20 to Life (for 20 to 30-somethings); they have begun creative discussion about summer events. For children, our [Family Pastor](#) is planning a Zoom camp and families have heard from her. Pastoral care team members may consider in person visits and continue phone contact with those who are vulnerable within our community.

And...there's nothing stopping us from Living Christ's Life and Love Alongside Others

There are multiple ways to be the church by serving others. Peruse the weekly Covid-19 updates on our [website](#) for practical ideas. Specifically, you may encourage adults experiencing poverty and isolation in downtown Ottawa by giving food donations through [Capital City Mission](#), or you may help our 'housemate' Union City Church as they support people recovering from addictions through their social enterprise [Carlington Booch](#). You may give to [Restoring Hope](#) as they relate with and feed street-engaged youth. These are just some of our friends in ministry. May this be a season of increasing generosity. We look forward to physically working with these friends again in the future.

I am open to considering other opportunities over the summer to ease into larger gatherings. This might mean facilitating two low-key in-person meetings in the church sanctuary (once in July and once in August) to pray in silence and with words, hear worship music and encourage one another. Such

meetings would have smaller attendance than a Sunday morning, provide space for the most isolated to gather, grow us in our love for God as we learn the joy of prayer, and help us develop our procedures. Stay tuned for more details and [contact me](#) and with your interest.

Sunday Online Worship Gathering at 10 a.m.

This Sunday, we will hear from Dr. Steve Elliott, National Superintendent of the Wesleyan Church of Canada, on the topic of spiritual priorities. Adults and children alike may consider drawing or speaking your answer to the following “drawing challenge” question during the service: What is one goal God has for your life?

Please contact [contact me](#) for Zoom links.

For this week’s scripture readings and other announcements, go to [Sunday’s bulletin](#).

Tuesday Prayer Gathering: June 23

You are welcome to [submit prayer requests](#) in advance of Tuesday’s meeting. This will be our last weekly prayer gathering before a summer schedule.

A life of prayer remains core to our existence. If you would like to spend this summer personally growing in your prayer life, please [contact me](#) and I will be happy to suggest some resources to guide you.

I’m struck by the psalm-writer’s words of longing for God in Psalm 63: “O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.” Will you consider risking your heart on God? David Benner in *Desiring God’s Will: Aligning Our Hearts with the Heart of God* says this about similar psalms: “Here is no teeth-clenching willful determination to follow God. Here we find no hint of resolve based on willpower. What we have is people who are following their heart – a heart captured by God’s heart.”

May our love for God, ourselves and others grow during this most unusual season.

With love and prayers,

Pastor Kerry Kronberg (with the whole team)