

13 September, 2020

Dear Church family and friends,

Many folks have asked about our plan to move towards in-person gatherings at church. I want you to know we are working hard at planning and implementing these plans. As a reminder, we have several small groups already meeting in person in various locations at the church. If you would like to schedule your small group meeting on the campus please contact the church office for space locations and availability to do so.

Our Worship and Music committee will meet on Sunday to discuss several options for baptisms, receiving confirmands and new members, as well as the ordination and installation of new church officers. Considerations include gathering in the sanctuary, in homes, and in offsite locations each with a hybrid approach allowing us to gather in-person as well as live streaming, taping, and dropping the events into our Sunday morning online worship. These recommendations will be shared with the Task Group of Session this Monday night, who will then make a responsible recommendation to Session this Tuesday night, concerning the safest ways to come together. Please remember if numbers continue to trend downward, we are keeping a close and hopeful eye on being able to return to worship as we have come to love it in days past.

I have a personal request as Head of Staff at James Island Presbyterian Church. Each of your staff and pastors are working as hard as we can to remain connected and provide transformational opportunities in this challenging time. Like you, we have never been here before. The challenges of "normal operations" magnified by the pandemic is heavy and pushing each of us to the limit. It is a most difficult place to make decisions as a team, as to when and how we can return to in-person gatherings. We desire to do so as much as you do, and we seek consensus in these decisions guided by the Holy Spirit, our love for each of you, and your safety and well-being as of primary importance.

Folks are meeting in many and various ways around the community and the world. We too ask "*wouldn't it be as safe for us to do so?*" The easy answer is yes, let's just do it. Our deeper consideration is to continue to follow the Spirit even when it is contrary to the ways and motivations of the world to do so.

I'm asking for your continued patience and prayers for your staff, pastors, and our community of faith. Nothing is more important to us than connection and worship and we remain in prayer as to the best and safest ways to be about it.

Burdened in the spirit, your staff and pastors prayerfully remain.



Pastor Sam