



# SOUTHSIDE

## MIDWEEK NEWSLETTER

### 5.20.20

#### Re-opening the Building – Barrett

We are planning to re-open our church building on Sunday, June 7.

As we prayerfully prepare for the day when part of our church family will meet again at the building, I want you to be aware of five key principles that have guided our decision-making.

First, our primary goal is not to get people back into the building. Instead, it is to honor God in everything we do. In 1 Corinthians 10:31, Paul wrote, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” So, we are making decisions about our return to the building based on a desire to please God, not on a desire to return to how things were prior to the virus.

Second, our attitude is to always be mindful of the other person. As citizens of the kingdom of God, we believe we are to always consider the other person more than we consider ourselves (Philippians 2:3). Therefore, this process of reopening the church building has less to do with the consideration of my rights/preferences and more to do with my consideration of the other person.

Third, our humble confession is that we are not experts in the process of reopening a church building during a pandemic. Therefore, we have made the intentional decision to closely follow the CDC guidelines and government instructions in regard to this situation. We have allowed these agencies to do much of the heavy lifting and we have leaned on their guidance in our decision-making. In case you are interested, here is a link to a document that contains specific instruction to houses of worship on how to more safely hold in-person worship services (<https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-healthy-at-work>). Once you click on the link, simply scroll down to the item called “Places of Worship.” We have worked to follow these guidelines as closely as possible.

Be humble,  
thinking of others  
as better than  
yourselves.

Philippians 2:3

Fourth, our time frame is a slow one. To use an old analogy, we are following the path of the tortoise and not the hare. We are not in a rush to get every one quickly back to the building again. We are going to take this slow and it is going to be accomplished in phases. We are not doing this out of fear or lack of faith but because we think a patient and deliberate approach is the most prudent way to reopen our church building.

Fifth, our decision to have people return to the building is an invitation and not an imposition. Please know the last thing we want is for this decision to make you feel pressured or guilty. We acknowledge this a complex issue and we trust the Holy Spirit to lead you in making the right choice for you and your family. We ask that everyone be quick to show one another a tremendous amount of love, grace, and patience as we make these choices.

In preparation for this big day, you will be emailed a document next Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, detailing the first phase of this process. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns about the plan.

## Survey Says – Kevin

Nearly 170 surveys were completed. Thanks to all of you for taking the time to fill those out. We did learn a few things from the results. We learned that people in our Southside family have a wide range of responses. If you are looking for someone who thinks like you about what is going on, that can happen here - from “this is no big deal” to “I’m staying put for the foreseeable future”. Respecting a variety of opinions is something I believe we do well around here so I’m sure we will likewise do a good job of respecting the different opinions we all have in this season.

I want to share a couple of survey details I thought are worth mentioning. 98.8% of respondents have been tuned into our live stream on Sundays. That’s awesome! We have a few people who’ve been putting in quite a bit of extra time to make that happen. A special thanks to Jim Davis. Because of his dedication, our live stream improves a little more each week. Michael Williams, Mike Holder, Alex Risen, and Gregory Williams have also invested time to make things work well. Thanks to all of you who have been involved in this on-going project.

Around 67% of those who responded are ready to return to the building – if it’s half full, three-quarters full or completely full. Bottom line – we miss seeing each other. Hopefully, you’ll have that opportunity soon. Plans are shaping up to make that happen. Please continue to be patient and understanding as we progress slowly toward that end.

One of the most significant messages I glean from this survey is contained in the comment section. Once again trust and confidence in the leadership team was clearly expressed. So many people communicated this message. We have a healthy church family because we are led by shepherds who are authentic, compassionate and engaged. This message continues to ring true and I’m grateful to be a part of such a healthy church family. Thanks to each of you for being willing followers and thanks to our shepherds for being Spirit-led leaders.

## A Shepherd’s Prayer – Dennis

The Hasselbrings have been pretty well "hunkered down" for many weeks now. This seems like the right approach for now for people of our age and risk group, but we ponder this several times a week. Are we being too careful? Or not careful enough? Are we missing out on too much? Or will we later be glad we were patient?

Now as a church family we are having a similar discussion about resuming meeting together. As believers we deeply desire to show our love and honor to God and to love one another as Jesus loves us. What path should we take? I think we must admit that none of us knows for sure. We will use the gifts that God has provided and continually pray for wisdom, discernment, and patience.

I am inspired today by Philippians 2:1-4: "Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others".

Here is my prayer for this week: Dear Father in Heaven, in this time of trial we seek your face. You have promised you are ready to pour out every spiritual blessing that we need for today: faith, courage, peace, comfort, patience, power, gentleness, contentment, strength, joy, hope, and endurance. We ask for an extra measure of humility and ask your Spirit to work in us so we can truly care about the interests of every person. Please correct us when we are tempted to look down on someone else for wanting to move too cautiously or too quickly. Help us to always show to others the grace which you have shown to us. We are confident to approach you today because of our Lord and Savior Jesus.