



SOUTHSIDE

MIDWEEK NEWSLETTER

7.1.20

Phase 2 Begins – Barrett

We are excited to announce to our Southside family that the second phase of our plan to re-gather at the building begins today, July 1. Our first phase has gone exceptionally well. We have closely followed all of the guidelines given to places of worship by both the CDC and the State of Kentucky. The first phase has consisted of having people back into the building only for the Sunday morning worship gathering. We have required masks, practiced social distancing, and kept our capacity well below the 33% max by only inviting small groups of the church family each Sunday. After this coming Sunday, July 5th, every member will have been given the opportunity to participate in a worship gathering at the building.



As we transition to Phase 2 of our plan to re-gather, we will continue these important practices from Phase 1. In addition, there will be two new components to this second phase of the plan. First, we will resume a Wednesday night youth group activity at the building beginning tonight, July 1 @ 6:30 PM. We will not resume the adult class, the children's activities, or the FriendSpeak ministry during this phase. The youth will meet in the Gathering Place for worship with social distancing and masks. They will then break into their small groups of typically 4-8 people and move to the basement classrooms. If social distancing can be maintained in the classrooms, then masks are optional for the small group time. Second, we will have a group of people meet in the Gathering Place for watching/worshiping with the live stream beginning on Sunday, July 12. According to the most recent update to the guidelines for places of worship issued on June 10, we can increase our maximum capacity to 50%. Therefore, the worship in the auditorium will continue with a group of about 100 people (including praise team). We feel this is our upper limit for the auditorium while still practicing social distancing. In addition, a group will be invited to meet in the Gathering Place at the same 10:30 time slot. They will sing along with the live stream, listen to the sermon via the live stream, and take communion along with the live stream. We think this space can accommodate an additional 100 people. By opening the Gathering Place on Sunday mornings, it will be possible to invite each member to the building every other week (alternating between the auditorium and the Gathering Place, details coming next week).

On Sunday, July 12 & July 26, the following life groups are invited to the building:

Goan, Dyer, Matar, Cornett, Van Dyke, Bertram, Miller. In addition, those not in a life group whose last name begins with the letter A-M.

On Sunday, July 19th & August 2, the following life groups are invited to the building:

Coffman, CATS group, Wooten, Franklin, Coffey, Morris, Williams, Butler. In addition, those not in a life group whose last name begins with the letters N-Z

Our above schedule will take us through the first week of August. We will be constantly monitoring the situation and will give another update toward the end of July about possibly moving to a Phase 3 if all things continue to go well. As always, please know that the leadership team at Southside fully supports your decision to remain at home during this time if you feel like it is the best decision for you and your family. The last thing we want to do is for any of our decisions to make you feel pressured to return to the building when you are not ready. Please let me know if you have any questions about this next phase of our plan.

Uncomfortable Blessings – Evan

It has been a challenging week for our household. Our baby girl's disposition, normally cheery and calm, has been violently disrupted by teething. The kitchen sink is leaking. Both of our vehicles need mechanical attention. Our home's HVAC system apparently is not capable of cooling our upstairs, which just happens to be where all the bedrooms are. Ongoing renovation projects have ground to a halt, perpetuating that less than desirable "construction zone" ambiance. And the grass (or, maybe more accurately, the collection of weeds that happen to accommodate a little bit of grass) keeps growing.

In the midst of these challenges, I am discovering how guilty I can be of taking simple comforts for granted. I'm also discovering how easily my inner peace can be lost, as my response to our circumstance has been less than joyful. A happy, healthy child is a blessing. Dependable plumbing is a blessing. Reliable transportation, functional A/C, and finished living spaces are all blessings. A lush lawn that didn't need cutting would really be a blessing! But I can make any of those things into an obstacle between myself and God when I expect them to never give me trouble. Instead of being thankful for God's lavish giving, I can make an idol of comfort. It hasn't been fun to receive trouble from all these things at once, but I wonder if it's been just the jolt of discomfort I've needed to be made aware of my idolatry.

We are reading through Gordon MacDonald's *Ordering Your Private World* with a small group of our college students this summer. One line from this week's reading has come to me at just the right moment: "Surely something is not a blessing if it seduces us away from inward spiritual cultivation." Like I said before, all the comforts of a home in good order are certainly blessings. However, God also blesses us by sometimes suspending those comforts and challenging us to consider whether we hold them in our hearts with gratitude or with expectation. Clearly, I have some room to grow! Next time my comfort is suspended, I hope to find that gratitude comes out on top.

A Shepherd's Prayer – Tom

I've been very encouraged lately by Barrett's sermons from Peter's first letter. Peter emphasizes how precious our faith is, and how great is our salvation. Peter's other New Testament letter begins again with a statement of how precious our faith is, and then adding a declaration of how precious the Lord's promises are. Through these promises we may "participate in the divine nature" having escaped the corruption in the world. The word translated participate (or partake) is related to the familiar Greek word *koinonia*, indicating an intimate sharing in God's qualities, becoming like Him (1 John 3:2). I have a long, long way to go in this calling (I'm sure you feel the same)! Peter then tells us that the key to our calling is to never stop adding other godly qualities to our faith: goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual affection and love. Peter's message about the necessity of adding these qualities to our faith, in view of the forgiveness we have received, is no less true during this period of persisting pandemic, alienating confinement, chaos and civil unrest. Every day is a day to make efforts to grow to be more like Jesus. My prayer for Southside is that this corrupt world will not stop us or even slow us, individually and collectively, in our growth as participants in the divine nature.