



Dear Ambassador Family,

The Session met again this week to discuss long term plans for continuing to meet together in person for worship. After much prayer and continued discussion that included the good and helpful feedback we received from many of you to the questionnaire sent out last week, we have decided that we will continue with an outdoor worship service for the remainder of June (the next three Sundays), and then beginning on July 5th, we will move to two services, an earlier outdoor service followed by a second service inside the building. Let me outline the reasons behind this decision.

- We are committed to gathering together as God's people for corporate worship on the Lord's Day and to providing opportunity for all of our people to do so in person in a manner that seeks to minimize risk of virus exposure, limit distractions to worship, and promote love and unity within the body at Ambassador.
- We are thankful and rejoice that close to 80% of our congregation has attended worship outdoors the past three Sundays, and more people (including visitors) have attended each successive week. As well, many of those who have not attended in person continue to use our online worship resources. However, we recognize meeting solely outdoors is not a long term solution.
- From our survey, which included responses from over 60% of APC families, we know that half of those who responded have concerns about coming indoors for a variety of reasons. In addition our seating capacity indoors is limited in numbers with physical distancing, necessitating the consideration of two services either way.
- We recognize and respect the ongoing health risk and spread of Covid19 and its potential long-term impact on our lives and communities, and thus the need to put in a longer term plan for how we can best gather for worship in this new environment.

With these and other considerations in mind, we believe moving to two services, one outdoors and one indoors, will provide the best solution for the majority of our people to gather on the Lord's Day freely and with limited risk and reservations according to their conscience. It will provide an in-person service for those at high risk or still uncomfortable attending indoors, as well as those desiring to return to worship inside the building. When we move to two services we will livestream the indoor service for online viewing and posting afterwards.

So why wait three weeks? Right now, meeting outside is working well, and providing the best opportunity for the majority of us to worship together. Moving to two services still requires a good bit of planning, preparation, and coordination of more volunteers which we want to be sure we have time to accomplish well. Also, the Session has graciously

agreed to my being away on a previously planned family vacation the week of June 20th - 27th with a guest minister preaching two Sundays. Lastly, NC government and health officials still recommend limits on indoor gatherings through June 26th. For these reasons, continuing our worship outdoors until July 5th makes the most sense.

We realize you will have questions about specific details, some of which we are still working through and deciding on. We plan to have those details worked out and communicated by the end of next week (6/19). If you have questions before then, we ask that you please contact one of the elders.

Let me end with some pastoral encouragement. These past months have brought struggles on many fronts, and have necessitated changes in our lives that have led to disruption and even loss of simple blessings we have long enjoyed and perhaps taken for granted. At the same time, they have provided many opportunities for us to see and experience the grace of God at work and many new blessings we may not have realized had this pandemic not come upon us. Our gracious and sovereign Lord is testing and strengthening our faith in these trying times to produce in us steadfastness, Christ-likeness and confident hope that cannot be shaken. For that we can rejoice (James 1:2-4; Romans 5:3-5).

This time of meeting outdoors and moving to two services also provides us new opportunities to give thanks in all things; to fix our eyes on Jesus; to love, honor and serve God and one another; to engage in gospel ministry in new ways; and to appreciate and celebrate the unity and diversity of God's church at APC and around the globe. Change is not easy, and our enemy the devil would love to gain a foothold to foster division and discouragement. May it not be so. Let us rejoice in the Lord always, and move forward in faith which is the assurance of what we hope for and conviction of what we cannot see. (Hebrews 11:1)

There is much to be thankful for in these days, and I'm thankful for our elders and deacons, for our staff and for each of you who have walked humbly and faithfully together in dependence upon Christ and his grace. Let us continue to pray for and encourage one another.

With love in Christ, and on behalf of the Session,

Pastor Harvey