



June 12, 2020

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update

### Returning to In-Person Gatherings at Olivet

While we are deeply longing to be together again, we recognize that loving your neighbor has meant staying home. We are working as a staff, council, and larger church body to ensure that we do not rush our return to regular in-person worship.

During this difficult time as we wrestle with when our longing to physically gather again, we are reminded of 1 Corinthians 10:23-24 & 32-33 “23 You say, “I have the right to do anything.” But not everything is helpful. Again you say, “I have the right to do anything.” But not everything builds us up. 24 No one should look out for their own interests. Instead, they should look out for the interests of others. 32 Don’t do anything that causes another person to trip and fall. It doesn’t matter if that person is a Jew or a Greek or a member of God’s church. 33 Follow my example. I try to please everyone in every way. I’m not looking out for what is good for me. I’m looking out for the interests of others. I do it so that they might be saved.

### **Will we immediately jump back into our old schedule?**

No. We plan to return to “normal” in three phases, using a variety published guidelines and metrics as a framework for our plan. We acknowledge that we will likely need to move between phases over the next few months and will continue to work diligently to adapt our plans and protocols to keep you safe.

When reviewing the data provided by the ND Department of Health over the past 14 days, we are seeing a downward trajectory of active cases in North Dakota, as well as a and relatively low daily positivity average for newly identified cases statewide. As a result of these trends, we have set a date for our first in-person worship service.

- Phase 1 includes continuing the livestream and radio broadcast of worship at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings, as well as adding an outdoor worship service once a week during the summer months. The outdoor in-person worship service will be offered while practicing extreme hygiene and strict physical distancing protocols.
- During this phase, our staff will continue to work remote or in small teams, as we have since the end of March.
- We will open the church to internal small groups (25 people max per group) during this phase. The intention of limiting our groups is to ensure we have time and resources to properly sanitize between events / groups.



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### **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update Continued**

#### **How will Olivet follow physical distancing guidelines before, during, and after worship in Phase 1?**

All in-person worship services will be held outdoors whenever possible. If weather does not permit outdoor worship during the scheduled time, worship that week will only take place via livestream and the radio broadcast on Sunday morning at 10 a.m.

- We will have hand sanitizer available in all common areas.
- Traffic flow will be regulated.
- You will be asked to stay with your household and remain at least 6 feet away from other households.
- Bulletins will be made available online but will not be printed.
- We ask that following worship, you “Go in Peace and Serve the Lord” rather than congregating with other households in the worship area or on the Olivet grounds.
- Greetings will be “no contact” including when we share the peace during worship and exiting the worship area at the conclusion of worship.
- We will not pass an offering plate, instead offerings can be brought to the stage area after worship.
- If Holy Communion is served, individual cups will be used for both bread and grape juice.
  - Distribution of the communion elements will happen when you arrive, by a gloved usher for your use during the service.
  - We will commune in unison.
- The church will remain closed, except for the restrooms, which will be available for use during worship as needed.
- No coffee and fellowship between services. The kitchen will remain closed.
- Masks will not be required but are highly encouraged for those attending worship.

We will share the details of phase 2 operations and safety protocols as we approach that phase of our re-opening.