

## **A Special Announcement From the Pastors and Elders**

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Hebrews 10:25

### **We Are Reopening Our Doors For Corporate Worship On June 7**

Dear Calvary Family,

This has been a difficult three months for most of us. What a blessing, though, to have the fellowship of Christian brothers & sisters, even if we've been unable to worship together. For us and our families, our mutual longing to worship again with the saints at Calvary has never been greater – especially as we see the Day of Christ, the Rapture of His Church, rapidly approaching.

Please forgive us for such a long note, but as we ready ourselves for the June 7 reopening, there are many important details we need to share with you.

#### **How We Made Our Decision To Reopen**

For those who question the timing and legality of reopening, on May 14 we received legal advice from the Liberty Counsel, a Christian nonprofit legal organization that is currently representing churches throughout the US, including Calvary Chapel of Bangor, Maine. Since that meeting, we have had multiple communications with our attorney, Richard Mast, who has clarified PA Governor Wolf's Executive Order that declares churches as “essential” and thus not subject to the strictest portions of the red, yellow & green protocols. As pastors and elders, we had already determined earlier that week to target June 7 for reopening, and the legal counsel we received confirmed that decision. Additionally, we had discussed the details of our decision to reopen with the Captain of the Central Bucks Regional Police and were informed that our local law enforcement authority supports these plans. Finally, President Trump's May 22 call for the opening of churches further bolstered our sense that we were moving in the right direction. As we have prayed and discussed this move for three weeks we remain united in our decision, believing this to be fully in the Lord's will.

Sadly, besides the danger of the virus itself, almost every topic surrounding Covid-19 has become divisive not only in our nation but also in the church, often dividing along partisan lines. Consequently, Christians have many opinions – some even resenting the order to wear masks in public places. While we understand those feelings, we are convinced that we're obligated, as Christians, to submit to the governing authorities, to respect one another's safety, and to maintain our public witness.

Many of us can recall the weeks following 9/11, when churches, including CCCB, had many visitors – people looking for meaning and help from God. After March 15 this year, the closure of almost every church in America precluded that from happening. There's the possibility that as word gets around that we are open we may also see visitors. That's just another reason why we must handle ourselves – as best we can – above reproach.

Our Staff has spent weeks reviewing the requirements of the various jurisdictions as they apply to churches and other “essential” businesses. Based on that, following are some things that we want you to know, for at least the early

weeks of worship here at Calvary.

### **Sunday Worship Only**

We are opening for Sunday worship only. Until further notice, Wednesday evening Bible Study will remain available only on Livestream.

### **No Children's Ministry For Now**

We believe it's unwise to provide Children's Ministry at this time but will reevaluate offering it in the coming weeks. For those who believe their children can tolerate the sanctuary worship, you're welcome to bring them. In the meantime, our Children's Ministry leaders will continue serving our children with their many online options.

### **Livestream For Those Who Can't Join Us**

We fully understand that some people may feel uncomfortable participating in group worship at this time. For that matter, those with health challenges or otherwise compromised immune systems will be wise to exercise caution and avoid groups for awhile. For these and other reasons, our worship service will continue to be Livestreamed to facilitate your worship with us while you're at home.

### **Illness**

Of course, if you or a family member is ill (fever, coughing, etc.), we ask that you remain at home until recovery is complete. Should you feel ill while here, please simply alert an usher and our Medical Team will care for you.

### **Two Services**

We will provide two services at 9:00 and 11:00, with seating in the sanctuary and the Café. Since occupancy of both locations will be based on "social distancing" guidelines, the allowable seating will be significantly reduced from normal.

### **Facility Cleanliness**

All main areas of the church will be sanitized before each of the two services. This will include disinfecting handrails, switches, door handles, etc., as well as spraying seats and thoroughly cleaning all bathrooms. As it pertains to air quality, our air conditioning system and air handlers enable us to replace the sanctuary air many times per hour while introducing fresh, outside air into the building.

### **Minimal Touching Necessary**

We have made every effort to minimize your need to touch things and risk the transfer of germs. For example, doors will be opened for you, Bibles, pens and Connect Cards will be removed from seats, and Tithe & Offering boxes will be available throughout the building, rather than using our common offering bags.

### **E-Ticketing**

With our reduced seating capacity we request that people notify us of their attendance by way of an E-Ticket, which you can easily select online. Simply go to our website [www.cccbucks.org](http://www.cccbucks.org) where you will be directed through the ticketing process. You will receive a notice that you may print or keep on your phone in order to show it Sunday morning. It sounds strange to require a "ticket" to worship the Lord, but this is the fairest way available to us for the near term to fairly help everyone to have a seat, given the current circumstances. Please know that your personal information will not be shared with any government agency.

### **Seating By Ushers**

When you enter the Sanctuary, you will be ushered to the next available seat. This will very likely not be your usual seat, but we ask that – for everyone's sake – we be flexible as we move through this transition. We will seat families together but all others will be seated six feet apart.

## **Face Masks**

In response to the most frequently asked question, yes, face masks will be expected. Not only is this currently a state order, but as Christians we will wear our masks out of respect for the health and safety of others, regardless of our personal opinions about this issue. However, some people are unable to wear a mask for personal health reasons and, according to the *Order of the Secretary of the PA Department of Health*, are not required to wear the mask. While we realize that there are many opinions about this issue, we will expect masks to be worn but *we will not require those with medical restrictions to do so.*

When John stands in the pulpit, he won't be wearing a mask, since he'll be standing behind a plexiglass shield. Similarly, the worship team vocalists will have plexiglass microphone shields and will not wear masks while singing. The rest of the worship team will be masked. When they leave the platform they will all wear them.

## **Compliance**

The details about the way in which we operate on Sunday morning are compliant with Federal, State and Local guidelines, including the CDC's most recent "Guidance For Communities of Faith."

## **Our Public Witness**

We are a loving church filled with great friendships and many of us haven't seen one another for months. While we understand the desire to fellowship with one another, we ask that you distance yourself in the parking lot, in order to provide a good witness for passersby. We want our witness to show that we are exercising our right to assemble and worship without appearing to defy the Governor's orders. Considering that we need to make room for cars and people who will be attending the 11:00 AM service, we ask that people leaving the 9:00 AM service to not linger long in the parking lot.

## **Please Be Patient With Us**

None of us has ever been down this road before and we want to navigate it carefully. We realize that many of these plans are quite different from our normal church culture. However, as the next few weeks pass and the State begins to loosen up on its restrictions, we have little doubt we'll be able to return to something more closely resembling the culture we all love.

Most importantly, please pray. Pray for us as leaders and for all those in our church family as we return to corporate worship and begin to comprehend God's plan for this next, and very critical, chapter of our church's life. Many of us are convinced that what we've been experiencing as a society is only a foretaste of what's coming on our nation and the world, and we want to be unified, in love with our Savior and one another. We can be of no value to a lost world if we are found squabbling and clamoring for our voice to be heard above everyone else's. May we make every effort to seek the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace, for that is HIS will for us.

We look forward to seeing you on Sunday June 7!

In The Lord's Faithful Grip,

John Hessler, Senior Pastor      Steve Feeley, Associate Pastor  
Elders: Chris Cavalier, Don Smith, Scott Walbridge, Paul Weinberger, Scott Wentz