

Update From the Session First Presbyterian Church of Kingwood

Guiding Principles for Gatherings at our Physical Campus

- 1. As a Session, we will make decisions that are guided by the Holy Spirit, focused on pastoral care for our congregation, and personal responsibility.** We will not make decisions out of fear or out of a sense of obedience to the freedom or restrictions authorized by the government.
 - ✦ 1 Corinthians 10:23 tells us — "Everything is lawful," but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is lawful," but not everything builds others up.
 - ✦ We will utilize information and guidance from our public officials so that we can determine the best next steps for our community. The church is an essential service and will never be closed, but just because we are allowed to open up our campus doesn't necessarily mean we should.
- 2. As a Session, we will make decisions that will provide for the spiritual health and physical safety of all our covenant partners, active participants, guests, and staff. We will reopen in a manner that includes as many people as possible so that we aren't the cause of further isolation.**
 - ✦ We are aware that the governor's order allows us to hold worship services on campus for 150 people or fewer starting this week. However, we believe that taking this action now would lead to further isolation of those who are vulnerable and at risk. This is not only a concern for older generations, young families would continue to be isolated and left out as we cannot safely and responsibly provide childcare. We hold high the value to open our campus in celebration with as many people participating as possible.
 - ✦ In addition, reopening our campus now would severely limit our capacity to provide the kind of online connection and content for those who need to stay at home. We do not want to sacrifice the important ministry we are doing now in order to rush back in person gatherings.
 - ✦ Deuteronomy 4:9 — "Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children." The church is a family made up of all generations, none should be knowingly left out of the life of the church.

3. As a Session, we will make decisions that will challenge us to continue the creative and innovative spirit that this time of crisis has revealed in us.

- ✦ Colossians 3:23 tells us — Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.
- ✦ From our daily zoom calls to our bible studies and groups that are meeting online, we honor the effort that everyone has put in to being connected and helping to connect one another through technology. Our newsletter subscriptions have increased from 400 to over 1200, we have all but a handful of our congregation connected to one another online, and our new Sent Groups will continue to keep us connected and caring for one another in the future.
- ✦ These have all become meaningful opportunities for content and connection in the life of our church, we will consider how this season has broadened both our vision and our capacity for being a Gathered and Sent Church.