

Friends of Christ at First,  
Grace to you and peace on this lovely day

Two days ago, Memorial Day, our Governor graciously granted permission for congregations to consider opening their doors for worship. His office also issued an extensive set of guidelines for doing so. You may read them here <https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-places-of-worship.pdf>. Yesterday, our neighboring Lutheran Bishop Guy Erwin offered on NPR that “*it will be harder for most congregations to meet those requirements than they realize.*”

We want to remind the members and friends of First that a task force was established by the Council in April (Frank DeLouise, Jenny Mehlow, Melinda Person, Jim Geison, Pastor Richard Elliott, and Pastor Kurt) to create and make recommendations for the Council’s reopening plan. They have been meeting weekly to serve you. You might easily guess, given the fluid nature of the pandemic amid the flood of information and ideas, the difficulty of their task. However, they have been making steady progress.

You have read our guiding document “**Reopening and Returning to Church: FLC’s Response to COVID-19**,” emailed to you on May 13 at 4:00 p.m. and now posted on the First website, and you’ve hopefully taken the **Reopening Survey**. The task force and Council, now backed up with data from our survey, are taking a decidedly cautious and conservative approach to reopening. Our overriding concern is to continue to protect the most vulnerable among us, to care for one another, and to care for ourselves. Our desire, at each step, is to meet and exceed the recommendations of our Governor, Public Health Officials, and those offered by our Bishop.

What’s next?

1. Members of a worship tech team (Mary Ann Horton, David Pohl, Brian Jensen, and Shaun Travers) are working to bring First up-to-date with the proper technology so that worship can be adequately recorded and broadcast from the sanctuary. The purchase of this equipment was just authorized last week. To purchase, configure, test, retest, and finally rehearse will alone take several weeks.
2. Weekly Worship, from Pastor’s home and when ready, the Sanctuary, will continue to be broadcast and available on the internet for the foreseeable future. Going forward it will likely become a regular feature of our life together. We know from the survey that over half the congregation is not yet ready to return until many more details are worked out.
3. The survey results strongly indicate that we move step by step in a deliberate way and not rush toward reopening.
4. The survey results as they stand, with added narrative by the task force, are being prepared into a report which will be sent to you, and posted on our website, within the week.

As society turns this next corner, so is the Church. Please be ready to hear more from us in the coming days and weeks. This is still a rapidly changing and fluid environment.

We certainly thank you for your patience. In these difficult days--some more than for others--please know your leadership at First is pedaling as fast as we can. We're grateful for your prayers.

peace,  
The Reopening Task-Force,  
Pastor Kurt Christenson