

June 12, 2020

Dear Heritage Family,

It has been over 3 months since our “normal” got turned upside down. Our world pretty much shut down to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. As a result, we have not met in-person for a Sunday service since early March. While we are so thankful for the livestream services that we have been able to have, we all miss the in-person fellowship with one another.

The state of Pennsylvania is beginning to cautiously walk through re-opening. On Friday, June 5th Governor Wolf moved our county into the yellow phase. He made some of the parameters of functioning clear, and yet also stated that churches/houses of worship are exempt from these parameters but should proceed with caution.

As you are aware, we put a Task Force and a Resource Team together to begin looking at what reopening at Heritage might look like. The Task Force has been meeting and will continue to meet, as necessary. That team, along with the input of the Resource Team and staff have formulated an initial plan. So, after much research, prayer, and discussion with the leadership, we have decided to begin in-person worship services on June 21st. Although each one of us has been eager to see our church family gather on Sunday mornings, we have waited a few more weeks to be sure we could have everything in place to do this safely.

We have a Plan and Guidelines sheet (included in this mailing and posted on our Website) that we request you read before our first service on June 21st. These guidelines will help you understand the protocols we have put in place for our in-person worship services as well as important information on registration and building usage prior to your arrival at the church building.

Here are some factors that led to our decision:

- Our primary concern is the spiritual health of our church and community. Looking holistically at everyone, this includes the spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional aspects of each person.
- We believe the Lord is leading us to be patient and re-open with care. As difficult as waiting can be, we trust that God will honor our diligent preparation. Information within our state changes almost daily, and certainly weekly. A careful and wise re-entry plan will survive these fluctuations.
- We want to ensure a smooth transition to simultaneously doing a live service and continue the livestream service for our Heritage family who will not be able to immediately rejoin us in-person.
- We want people who are attending a Sunday morning service to be safe. Taking the time to prepare our spaces and equip our people will ensure this happens.
- We have significant preparations to make. We need to recruit and train additional volunteers for our guest services as well as a team that would oversee the sanitation and cleaning aspects of each Sunday service. **If you have an interest in being a part of the Sunday morning guest services team or cleaning team, please email us at info@wearehbc.com or call the church office (570) 587-2543.**

We recognize that children's and youth ministry is one of the strong elements of our corporate worship. We regret that we will not be able to offer that for the time being. This will be part of a second phase that we are already beginning to discuss. We will keep you updated as changes are made. We know that the Lord has still been at work in our lives. We are in a unique time that is providing growth opportunities in all of us. Let us continue to embrace the next few weeks and keep moving forward in our walk, love for, and growth in the Lord. Let us ask God to give us a plan for "re-opening" our personal lives. We do not want to just jump back into false normalcy and forget all that He has been teaching us during this challenging time. Please continue to draw close to Him!

In this pandemic, we find so much to be thankful for:

1. Growth in technology capabilities that have enabled us to reach others that we have not reached before.
2. Your continued generosity with your tithes and offerings.
3. The prayer support for the church and the leaders.
4. The encouraging words, notes, emails, and phone conversations that we have had with many of you. It has been refreshing for us!

Serving Together,

Paul

Paul Osborn on behalf of the Task Force Team