



Dear PCOM Family,

August 23, 2020

When we first transitioned to virtual worship services in March, each of us thought we'd be online for a few weeks at most. Pastor Courtney said she thought it might last "as long as two months!" We all assumed that we'd be back to worshipping in person by Easter. What a long, strange season it's been!

As difficult as the stay-at-home guidelines have been, they also served to unite us. Now, as California transitions into new phases of reopening and our church works to wisely and safely follow suit, we will be faced with a new set of challenges that have the dangerous potential to divide us. In many ways, this pandemic has deepened a rift across our country and our communities, with everything from the wearing of masks to the reopening of schools causing stress, anger, fear, and distrust.

Pastor Jackson's dear friend (and one of our guest preachers from last summer!) Rev. Aaron Stewart describes people as falling into three groups when it comes to reopening: "Green light people, yellow light people, and red light people." The green-lighters are ready to go back to normal immediately. The yellow light folks are cautious but ready to do more than they've been doing. The red light group will wait to resume normal activities until the risk is minimal. Each group has reasons for falling where it does, and many feel very passionately about what others (including their church!) should or should not be doing.

To this end, we wanted to bring a bit of hope and a bit of clarity to the days ahead.

First, we will continue to provide the same robust, engaging virtual content as we have throughout the pandemic, including working to upgrade our technological capabilities to better serve our congregation. Digital sanctuary and Awake worship will stream live at 10am each Sunday morning, with replays available beginning at 11am. The weekly PCOM Podcast will go on, and the all-church Bible study (with both in-person and Zoom groups available!) is the first of many to come. Virtual Sunday School is ongoing, with opportunities for kids and parents to learn together. **Pastors Daryl and Courtney have headed up the technological elements of worship and ministry**, including a great deal of behind-the-scenes problem solving and tech support, **and they will continue to do so.**

Secondly, in consultation with our Session and our Reopening Task Force, we plan to slowly begin offering more in-person opportunities for fellowship, connection, and worship. For now, each of these will look different than they have in the past, as we do not want to contribute to community spread that could overwhelm our hardworking hospitals. We ask for your continued patience and prayer as we work to offer robust in-person ministries in creative and new ways. **Pastor Jackson will be overseeing in-person events, activities, and worship.**

You may be raring to get back to in-person worship, hunkered down at home until a vaccine is available, or somewhere in between, but wherever you find yourself on that spectrum, we urge you to press in with Jesus and seek his wisdom in practicing patience with yourself, your neighbors, and your church community. This crisis has brought many different needs, perspectives, and concerns to the surface, and now more than ever, church must be a place where people who aren't on the same page can live and love and follow Jesus together. Your neighbor who is hesitant to return to in-person activities may have an underlying health condition they haven't told you about; your friend from the next pew who is impatient to return may be on the cusp of a life-changing faith decision. When in doubt, let's commit to believing the best of one another.

Our goals in this next season are threefold: to keep our people attentive to Jesus, to care for our community by not becoming a vector for this disease, and to love our neighbors (and fellow congregants, elders, staff, and pastors) as ourselves by bearing with each other in love, gentleness, and patience.

For more details on our reopening roadmap, put together by our fantastic, dedicated, and thoughtful Reopening Task Force (a team composed of elders, a deacon, a youth parent/Awake representative, and a public health team—including a public health nurse with 40+ years' experience and a doctor of public health!) and our pastors, [click here](#).

This is not an easy season, friends. But we serve a great big, loving God. And it is in the difficult seasons that God seems to draw particularly near while teaching us particularly important and tender lessons. Let us nurture open hearts, open hands, and open eyes as we wait to see what God will do next.

In Christ,

Your pastors

The image shows three handwritten signatures in black ink. From left to right, they are: 'Jackson' with a large, flowing initial 'J'; 'Daryl' with a large initial 'D' and the name written in a simple, blocky font; and 'Courtney' with a large, elegant initial 'C' and a cursive-style name.