

An Update about Berkey & COVID-19
February 25, 2021

Next Sunday, March 7, will mark a year since we first canceled Sunday morning services at our church building. It's been a hard year, and, unfortunately, it will still be some time before we all will be able to gather inside for worship. However, we can give thanks to God for the increasing number of people who have been vaccinated, the decrease in infection rates, and the promise of warmer months when we'll have more options to gather outside.

We as pastoral staff are continuing to monitor how we as a congregation can best protect and care for each other. As we do so, we have asked Dan Nafziger and Paul Shetler Fast to give us guidance because of their expertise in infectious diseases and public health.

After consultation with them and the Spiritual Leadership Team, we sense that we can safely reopen our church building for groups of ten persons or fewer. Meetings should be limited to two hours, and space must be reserved in advance by contacting Jenny Hooley, Communications & Office Manager. As always, people are asked to observe social distancing of at least six feet, to wear masks (for those over age two), and to wash hands or use hand sanitizer regularly.

Many of us have now been vaccinated, and some may wonder why we are choosing not to hold Sunday morning services at our church building for those who have received the vaccine. In our first communication about COVID-19 almost a year ago, we noted that it seemed "best for all of us to share the burden of giving up our large gatherings" rather than bifurcating the congregation based on people's vulnerability to infection. We continue to feel this way. We do hope, however, that we soon will be able to worship outside in a larger gathering.

Mark Schloneger, Joanne Gallardo, Richard Kauffman

Guidelines for use of building

1. Groups of ten persons or fewer may reserve space to meet in the building by contacting Jenny Hooley in advance.
2. Observe social distancing of six feet or more, wear masks at all times, and use hand sanitizer upon entering the building (provided).
3. If required, please use the main bathrooms just outside the fellowship hall.
4. Meetings may last no longer than two hours.
5. Kitchen and office areas are restricted without prior permission.
6. When finished, please thoroughly clean areas of use with soap and water and then disinfectant wipes or spray.