

August 20, 2020

Dear Friends,

Last Sunday we announced that on August 23rd we'll be having our first "in person" public gathering here at Valley Church since March... over five months ago. We're very excited about Sunday and from this point on, we're planning to have at least two (if not more) services outdoors weekly. Thank you for your patience as we work hard to provide opportunities for in-person fellowship and worship while also doing our best to ensure the health and safety of our community. Let me share a few thoughts about the dynamic of gathering together while being safe.

When the "Shelter in Place" first started we all hoped these restrictions would be lifted quickly and that the virus would end. The reality has set in and it's clear the restrictions are going to be with us for a while. Our Elders and Pastors prayerfully made the decision some time ago that Valley Church will comply with all federal, state, and county guidelines as required. The Board continues to stand behind the mission and vision of Valley Church and will not compromise our commitment to "make disciples". At this point in time we do not see that these requirements are prohibiting us from preaching the Gospel or making disciples. They ARE requiring us to be creative and to change the way we've done things. We see this as a great challenge for us to try new things and improve along the way. While our church buildings may be closed, the Gospel cannot be shut down. We are continually monitoring the situation with our county health department and more important, are continually asking God for wisdom and guidance on the best path forward for building His Kingdom.

We fully believe that physically being together is Biblically and practically better than being apart. We believe these Sunday services meet that need and keep us safe. Many of you have been asking for this for a long time. RSVPs for both 5:30 and 7 pm services filled up almost

immediately. County guidelines restrict us to 60 people total, so we're looking for ways to add more. Our plan going forward is to do these services every weekend. We're grateful for the beautiful Silicon Valley weather and plan to take advantage of it as long as we can. This Sunday our "Church on the Grass" service will have a special message, but in the future our plan is to have the same sermon as the recorded services.

Others of you are hesitant to get together for a variety of reasons. We want to affirm you and the decisions you are making on a day to day basis. We all have different life situations, health conditions, and sensitivities to these issues. In no way is anyone being critical or judging those who choose not to attend at this time. In fact, we're encouraging those of you in high risk demographics not to attend. We sincerely hope that you are connecting with others via Zoom in our Joel Moments, small groups, Bible studies, prayer meetings, and youth and young adult online meetings. The opportunities are there – we hope you are able to join in. Once you feel comfortable to join our "live" events, we hope you'll be able to do so with confidence. None of us enjoys wearing masks, social distancing, or repeatedly hand sanitizing but we understand why they are necessary right now. Take your time and join us as the Lord leads you. By His grace, we'll be ready for any and all who want to attend. We're fine-tuning our sign up process and will have more information coming to you very soon on that.

Again, thanks for your prayers and patience. One way or the other, we hope to see you this weekend – live and/or online!

In Christ,

Kurt