

May 4, 2020

To the Saints of Mt. Holly,

Wow! We are in the month of May and the last time we worshipped together was March 15<sup>th</sup>. I pray all is well with each of you. I hope each of you is healthy and if you are employed, you still have your job. I am truly thankful that you are so faithful to the Lord in your giving to the church and her ministries.

I'm sure you are asking what is the game plan for the church in the upcoming months. The elders, Mike, Dennis, and I met via Zoom last Wednesday night and discussed how to best reopen the church. Phase one will be to have 'driven-in' church. You can stay in your car and listen to the sermon through your car radio. A transmitter has been ordered so we can broadcast through your car radio. Once we receive the transmitter and have a test run, we will announce our first 'drive-in' church service. Thanks be to God for technology!

Phase two is entering our sanctuary. You will discover all the hymn books and rack items have been removed from the pews. Certain pews will be marked off so we remain separated. Children will remain in the sanctuary during the worship service. There will be no children's church, and no greeting time. The service will be reduced in time. We will probably have only two songs, one in the beginning and one at end of the service which will be on the screens. The offering plate will not be passed. Each entrance into the sanctuary will have a receptacle for your offering. If you desire to wear a mask, please do so. A few masks will be available in the church. For the safety of all, please keep a safe distance from one another. There will be no alter call during the service. If someone needs to talk to me about a spiritual issue, they can meet me in my church office after the service.

In Phase three, Sunday School, children's church, and nursery will be reopened. These ideas come from the Southern Baptist Convention and are the ones most of the 44,000 SBC churches are actively doing or will implement very soon. Remember, the sermons are on our website and we will have a Zoom Bible study beginning on Wednesday evenings, May 6th from 7 – 8 pm. During this time we will discuss the sermon from the prior Sunday.

James 1:2-4 says, <sup>2</sup>*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,* <sup>3</sup>*knowing that the testing of your faith produces (patience, endurance, steadfastness).* <sup>4</sup>*But let (patience, endurance, steadfastness) have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.* One author says that 'faith is not faith until it is tested.' The Lord is definitely testing our faith through this global pandemic. The trial that we are in will reveal much about our faith. Hopefully, each of us will allow this trial to produce in us 'patience, endurance, and steadfastness.' We will not give up on our faith in Jesus or on our church body. We must remain fervent in our prayer for each other and display the joy of Christ to others during this pandemic. We will not be defeated. One of the joys I experience each Sunday morning is to pray for you by name. I sit in my recliner, close my eyes, and I can see where each of you sit in the sanctuary, and I begin to pray. I pray that our faith grows through prayer and the Word in order to display God's glory as we persevere with Him to the end. Perseverance of the saints is a great doctrine of our faith. This doctrine reveals that our relationship with Christ truly depends upon Him to see us through any trial that is set before us. As one theologian stated, "It is God's grace doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves." Jesus is our Good Shepherd Who is leading us on this path of righteousness for His name's sake (Psalm 23:3b). Jesus is our Divine Shepherd, what do we have to fear? Press on my beloved, we will make it together and very soon we will sing the praises of God together. What wonderful joy awaits us when we will once again be together as one voice in song, prayer, and love.

Love and Grace2U,  
Pastor Lindsay