



*"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." "God has made everything beautiful in its time."*

*Ecclesiastes 3: 1 & 11a*

Dear Members and Friends of Central Church,

We certainly are living through a challenging season of life; a season of uncertainty and waiting for the new to come. Both the coronavirus pandemic and recent racial strife has left our country weary and hoping for better days. With you, we have been praying that healing and renewal may come to the communities of our land.

As a faith community, we look for fresh hope too. Like you we miss the familiar practices that bring us together in-person. Worship and other expressions of gathering are part of what define us as community. Unfortunately, given that the coronavirus is still a real and measureable threat to the health of the community, we are reluctant to restart activities that may provide a setting for this disease to be transmitted.

**Given that concern, we are postponing the start of Church in the Park.** Here's some of our reasoning:

- This is a serious matter and a very real health risk with numbers yet to flatten out in a sustained way in our state.
- A majority of those who responded to our re-gathering survey stated interest in attending CIP this summer. Of that group the majority also identified as at-risk for exposure to COVID19. We have many elders in our congregation, and do not want to put our senior members at unnecessarily risk.
- We also wrestle with the question of fairness: Should some be told to stay home if they are at-risk or concerned, while others have the option to attend? We do not want to give anyone the idea that it "Must be OK" to come if others are attending.

- Being a public venue we have little control over the safety guidelines we would put in place. While social distancing is possible at Sunset Park we cannot assure everyone's safety or that all would observe our health and safety protocols.

While the Pastors and Staff have worked together to get us through what is hopefully the worst of this health crisis, a Re-Gathering Task Force is being put in place to help us navigate our way through the coming year. COVID19 response protocols need to be in place in case someone in the re-gathered community has been infected with the virus. Additionally a plan for safely regathering in the building must be devised.

We know this will come as a disappointment to many of you. We hope you will understand. Our first commitment is to "do no harm" as leaders. We care about the safety of our congregation and when the time is right, hopefully sooner than later, we will meet again. We hope you have found our online options for worship and learning to be a blessing. We will continue to offer worship and programming this way and we are already working to improve the quality and impact of what we offer, so we can minister to more people.

As the writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us, God is bringing beauty out of this season of life. May we know that beauty today even as we wait with hope for tomorrow.

Stay Tuned,

*Pastor Dale     Pastor Chris*