

IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT WORSHIP AT WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN

Dear Congregation,

For many months now, we have been navigating the uncharted waters of a pandemic unlike anything we have faced in our lifetimes. Although we had high hopes that the summer would weaken the spread of the virus as often happens with the flu, the actual case has been just the opposite. As our state and nation have opened up, allowing more personal contact possibilities, the number of cases is now rising even faster than we have seen in the early spring.

Here at Westminster, we too have tested the waters of re-opening, and began allowing in-person worship in June. Even in doing so, we have had to follow strict social distancing guidelines, including wearing masks and sitting far apart in the sanctuary.

What we have discovered is that very few people feel safe coming back to worship. Our attendance in June started at 18, but as the virus situation worsened during this last month, our most recent in-person attendance was 3. Meanwhile, our number of online worshippers has remained strong.

Because our congregation does not seem ready to return to in-person worship, and because the pandemic is worsening with each new day, your staff and session have concurred that it is best to close down in-person worship again, and offer worship completely online. We will enact this on Sunday, July 12. For this Sunday, July 5, we will have the doors unlocked for anyone who wants to be present, but please know that masks are required; seating is separated, and singing is not allowed due to possible virus spread.

We regret that this year has turned out the way it has, and that we seem to be in no better position this late into the calendar year. Let us all pray that this situation will turn around, and that life can return to some sense of normality. In the meantime, the vast majority of costs for the church are fixed, and continue. Your financial support is very much needed at this time. Together, let us keep the church strong, as we continue to ministry in good times and in bad times.

May God bless you and keep you safe,

In God's Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul J. Kirbas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "K".

Dr. Paul J Kirbas

Pastor/Head of Staff



Westminster's Soft Opening for June 21st, 2020

Dear Congregation,

This is an important communication regarding the next phase of opening for Westminster Presbyterian Church. Beginning this Sunday, June 21, we will begin a “soft opening” of in-person worship at our Sunday Pastor’s Class and Worship Service. The Pastor Class will be held in classroom 103/104, and is the last session of a 4 week class that has been offered online. The Pastor’s Class will not return until August. On Sundays, we will offer 1 worship service in the sanctuary at 10:00 AM. In order to observe CDC guidelines, the following instructions are offered for our in-person worship:

1. **Although our doors will be open on Sundays, we still encourage our members, especially those in vulnerable populations, to stay at home and worship with us online.** During this phase of our opening, we will consider our services to be mainly online, but with a limited “studio audience” within the sanctuary.
2. Doors will open at 9:00 AM on Sunday mornings for the Pastor’s Classes. For Sundays with Worship only, doors will open at 9:30 AM.
3. Everyone is asked to enter the building through the portico at 44th street. Before you enter the doors, we will need to record your attendance, give you your bulletin, and ensure that you have a mask.
4. Masks are required for the entire time you are present in the building. If you do not have a mask, we will be able to give you one at the door.
5. The Pastor’s classroom and the Sanctuary have been set up for social distancing. Please do not move any chairs in the Pastor’s classroom. You are asked to enter the space through the 103 doorway, and exit through the 104 doorway.
6. If you are attending the Pastor’s Class, please exit the room quickly once the class is over so that we can prepare the room for its next use.
7. As you enter the Sanctuary, please enter through the chancel doors or the bell tower doors. The pews show designated seating, with blue tape showing where people are not allowed to sit. We will need to spread out throughout the Sanctuary.
8. Our services will include hymns. We encourage people who are viewing online to sing the hymns, but we request that those in the Sanctuary refrain from singing and receive the hymns through our soloist.
9. When the service is over, we will ask people to exit through the narthex or the bell tower doors. We will excuse participants one row at a time, to allow social distancing. Please do not linger in the building.
10. We will not have a nursery available, but classroom 103 will be available for members with young children. The service will be presented on the screens.

Please know that these guidelines have been put in place out of our concern for the safety of all our congregation. We do not know how long we will have to abide by these guidelines, or if we may need to reverse course if the COVID situation become worse. In these trying times, we appreciate your continuing support.

Thank you!