



PINE VALLEY
Church of God

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June 25, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: PVCOG Church Family

FROM: Larry Horrell, Pastor

Greetings! Last week, I notified you of our plans for resuming in-person Sunday Worship Services this week on June 28, 2020. Since then, the Church & Pastor's Council and I have been prayerfully working; carefully planning for every possible safety precaution; considering the data and current conditions in our area; as well investigating the experiences of other churches that have resumed public worship. In light of all these factors, I am writing to inform you that we have prayerfully decided to delay our plans to resume Sunday gatherings until sometime in July. Please note the following considerations that guided our decision:

- Current COVID-19 statistics for New Hanover, Brunswick and Pender Counties are rising higher, and at a greater rate of increase than what we have experienced since the pandemic reached our area several months ago.
- Local and state health officials are anticipating this trend to worsen over the next few weeks (as per contacts in several government agencies, including the Governor's Office).
- I was informed yesterday of four Church of God churches in Eastern North Carolina, where individuals attended with a confirmed case of COVID-19 (some confirmed before church attendance and some after).
- All four churches resumed public, in-house worship gatherings in June 2020.
- Three of the four churches are now experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19 spreading among their congregations. In each case, it started with one individual.
- Each church is located in a different county and each county has widely different levels of COVID-19 infections and deaths, from very low (comparable to Brunswick and Pender Counties) to some of the highest in NC and much higher than New Hanover County. In other words, the risk of infection and the spread of COVID-19 can happen anywhere!
- Roughly 60% of our congregation is in the high-risk age bracket, many of which have pre-existing health conditions such as: high-blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, various forms of cancer, and respiratory conditions including, asthma, emphysema and COPD.

I realize that many of you may not understand our reasoning, considering the fact that many local churches have resumed public services. Some might even judge this decision as demonstrating a lack of faith. To anyone with that opinion, I would simply ask you to consider: The risk any one of us individually takes by venturing out in public is limited to our self directly, and to our family indirectly. However, when we encourage you to gather together, we are directly placing everyone who attends at risk, even while enforcing the strictest safety protocols! God's Word admonishes us to employ wisdom and faith in equal measure. Therefore, I hope you can appreciate the responsibility I feel as your Pastor, and our Council feels for your health and safety. Thus, our decision has been made with your safety in mind! In the meantime, please review the enclosed flyer for ways you can connect and join us for worship every Sunday. Please know that Jennifer and I love you; we miss you, and we look forward to seeing you when conditions permit our Pine Valley family to safely join together in-person again for worship in our Sanctuary!

Christ centered Kingdom focused Spirit led