

Prince of Peace Presbyterian Church

Worship Committee Plans Outdoor Worship!

Great news! After weighing the state of Covid-19 in Anne Arundel County, the regulations for religious institutions, the survey results from the congregation, and the weather, **the Worship Committee and Session have decided to try holding Kick-Off Sunday on September 13th, with outdoor worship in our parking lot.** POP is excited for the opportunity to gather together in some form in person, and believe we have worked out a way to do this safely and meaningfully.

Here's what you need to know:

- The service will take place in the parking lot from the top part of the circular drive to the upper lot by the labyrinth.
- Congregants who want to participate will be required to bring folding chairs of their own, to maintain six feet or more of physical distance from others at all times, and to wear masks over their noses and mouths.
- The number of participants will be limited by space and regulations. **Everyone who wants to attend will need to reserve spots by each Friday at noon with the church office (church.office@popchurch.org or 410-721-2313).** Spots are available on a first-called, first-served basis for members and non-members alike.

- ****If the weather on Sunday mornings does not allow for outdoor worship because of rain or heavy winds, services will be 100% virtual for everyone.** We will not be moving worship inside for those who have reservations at this time.
- Outdoor worship will not include congregational singing, and most likely will not include congregational responses in unison either. But there will be prayers, scripture, sermon, and music like a typical service. We will try to live-stream this service. If it turns out that we cannot maintain adequate sound quality, we will explore doing a separate live-streamed service inside as usual and moving the outside service to an earlier time of day.

Questions:

- **What if I can't or don't want to wear a mask?**
Masking of nose and mouth is mandatory for everyone over two. If you cannot mask for health reasons or do not want to wear one for ideological reasons, we invite you to join us for worship online through the [website](#) or [Facebook page](#). A limited number of masks will be available for people who accidentally forget to bring theirs from home, but we ask that you bring your own if possible.
- **What if I have an underlying condition that makes me high risk for COVID-19?**
We do not want worship to be a source of harm for anyone. **If you are at high risk, please stay home and join us for worship online.**
- **What if I make a reservation but have a cough or don't feel 100% on Sunday morning?**
Please do not come to the church if you are not feeling well, even if you think your symptoms might be allergies or just the common cold. Although we do not have plans to conduct temperature checks, no one with a fever or symptoms associated with COVID-19 (cough, headache, fever, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, odd bruising, or rash pattern on toes) should attend in person. It is safer for all of us if you join us for worship online.
- **What happens when it gets cold?**
The Worship Committee has not yet decided when we will stop outdoor worship and/or when we will open indoor worship. We have to take these things one step at a time because circumstances are changing all the time.
- **Will there be childcare?**
No. We are not able to provide childcare, so we ask families to be responsible for ensuring their children maintain social distance and wear masks if over two years old.
- **Will there be Communion?**
At this point we plan to include the sacraments in some form in our outdoor worship services. We have prepared, sealed Communion cups that come with wafers that we will distribute on Communion Sundays, and we will bring a bowl of water outside for baptisms.
- **What about people who show up without a reservation?**
Although it is our desire to be inclusive and welcoming of everyone who wants to worship God with us, for the time being and by necessity, our inclusivity will have to come from our being available to all online. **Non-registered congregants and visitors might be turned away and asked to return home to worship online if the maximum number for safe social distancing has been met or masks are not worn.**

- **Can I use the church bathrooms?**
The handicapped accessible family bathroom will be available for emergencies only. We ask that most people use the facilities at their homes before or after worship.

- **What happens if someone who attends gets sick?**

If you test positive or have been diagnosed as presumptively positive with COVID-19 after having worshiped in person on a Sunday, please contact POP immediately. **We will notify those who made reservations for that day of their potential for exposure.** This is another benefit of reservations; they will help us initiate contact tracing. If we discover people are getting sick, we will reconsider our decision to do in-person worship and alert the congregation if we will be discontinuing outside worship.

