

May 2020 Elders' Notes

Greetings, Fellowship North!

What a meaningful time of fellowship and reflection we had on Wednesday at New Community. We celebrated the first *New Community* service ever, via Zoom. Yes a little weird, a little different, but yet we did it! It was great seeing all who were able to attend, and we missed seeing all of you who could not attend. Also, we *virtually* shared the Lord's Table together; how many of you used what Jesus would have, these past few times? (Ha-Ha)

The night was short and sweet, but packed with very important information about upcoming events. The elders shared some important announcements such as attending *Open Door*, being sure to read the weekly newsletter and Sunday bulletin, our 36th Church anniversary service, and joining effort to support *Camp Good Eats*, which begin June 1. We shared more about two very important issues, which included the status of the pastoral search and the building re-open date or what we are referring to as, the *Return to the Building Plan (RTTB Plan)*. This communication will mainly focus on the details of the RTTB Plan.

As stated on Wednesday, the elders understand that our decisions are not going to go over well with everyone, but we pray that everyone comes to the understanding that as *Jeremiah 29:11* and *3 John 1:2* states, "God is for you," and we are for you. We want only the best for every member. Every voice matters, every heart, soul and the wellbeing of each individual is important to us, and we want to shepherd you well for such a time as this. That being said, we carry the unbelievable burden of never wanting any one person or more to become ill because of gathering in the building.

Staff and the elder board have been in communication with numerous local and national organizations, as well as attending a conference and other virtual gatherings and reading articles about how to lead during the time we find ourselves in. We are also committed to following local government guidelines and science information that is being reported from those updates so that we have access to this information via all mediums; but above all other things, we are in constant prayer about how to lead FN during this pandemic.

We intentionally called the RTTB Plan the "return to the building" plan and not the "return to the church" plan because *#WeAre* the church, and *#YouAre* the church! Together we make up the local church and collectively around the world, each local church makes up "The Church", His Church! The RTTB Plan will consist of three phases.

The RTTB Plan

- **Phase I** will consist of the target date as to when we plan to return to the building (as of now, June 21) along with guidelines of policies and procedures that need to be followed to ensure everyone's safety. Phase I consists of bringing in the targeted number of members (as of now, approx. 75) that can come back into the building, at any one time. We are currently determining how to best assign seating, (since we do not have pews) based on availability.
- **Phase II** will give additional guidelines and provide lessons learned during Phase I. Phase II will be cyclical in nature, as this phase will allow us to increase the total occupancy of the building, as we move out further from the targeted return date, and assuming that COVID-19 positive cases are relatively declining, until we reach Phase III.
- **Phase III** will be the steps, guidelines, and lessons learned for decommissioning of Phase I and Phase II as we would be returning to the building before COVID-19. (Cont'd on Page 2)

Navigating Phase I

Phase I of the RTTB Plan is currently in the works, and we are tentatively targeting **June 21** as the date for returning to the building. Again, this date is tentatively set and could change, depending on on-going developments.

- Things that could change the date are:
 - **Lack of Volunteers: We'll need people who'll assist with:**
 - Keeping a list of everyone in the building, in case of an outbreak
 - directing traffic in/out the building
 - monitoring public areas to ensure social distancing and avoiding touching
 - water stations (possibly)
 - Restroom - cleanup & sanitizing
 - Keeping all appropriate doors propped open
 - Ushering members to assigned seating
 - Ensuring masks are worn unless waiver-granted by the State to include designated speakers and singers
 - Interested? send email to info@fellowshipnorth.net or elders@fellowshipnorth.net
 - **14 Day non-reduction of positive cases**
 - Follow local and state government recommendations on data trends
 - Follow local and state government recommendations on public gathering
- **Those who should NOT attend public services:**
 - Anyone with a compromised immune system
 - Any child under the age of 18 (we will not have Children's Church until further notice)
 - Anyone that has been out of their normal circles for the past 14 days
 - Anyone that shows signs of fever, **uncontrollable** coughs and/or sneezing
 - Anyone **not** willing to wear a mask in the building
 - Anyone who feels uncomfortable about attending (We would never negatively judge you for this decision.)

NOTE: *There are staff and members who have compromised immune systems that play a key role in what we do on Sunday mornings. Returning to the building will greatly affect their involvement in continuing to participate in the same capacity as they have been in recent weeks. Likewise, we have staff who have continually worked to provide services and ministry tools to the body through the online events and ongoing care of the members and the building during this time of social distancing.*

We do not want to overburden them, and we are tremendously grateful for all the sacrifices that they have made on behalf of Fellowship North. We also would never want them to become ill, as their roles have been so critical to helping us all remain connected. Therefore, if we do not have volunteers to help with the aforementioned tasks, we will not be able to return to the building in large settings, until those positions are covered or the threat of contracting COVID-19 has been drastically reduced.

(You may review more information on state and local guidelines, [here](#).)

Again, we all must ask ourselves:

Do we want to be *comfortable* or be more *connected*?

We all have missed being in the building and being in fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ, but we must challenge ourselves to seek God for the wisdom about the ways in which He would have for us to

connect, otherwise. We are thankful that we have found other ways to fellowship, and if you are isolated, we implore you to reach out and let us know.

As your elders, we commit to continuing to do our best to review all correspondence that those from the church are sending. This includes emails, videos, social media posts, meeting notes, etc. We'll all benefit if we do this. Doing God's ministry work is not an *either/or* (as *in online* or *in person*) issue when it comes to technology - it is a *both/and* notion (that will require both *the internet* and *in person* effort, along with God's wisdom) Using ZOOM, Facebook and other platforms are great ways to stay connected. It is somewhat weird -- like a *Zoom New Community* -- but it works!

The elders understand that we are all wired differently and need different things to make us feel more connected. We will continue to pray over the best options to help in equipping and connecting with each of you, as we all follow Jesus. We hope that you will do the same - and share, as God shares with you.

In closing, reflect on this:

On a scale of 1 to 10, how connected are you to the church during the week?

What is one way you can stay connected to the church long after service is over?

We love you all,

The Elders of Fellowship North

Friday, May 22 Addendum: We are aware of the developments regarding the statement made by the president, this afternoon. As of now, we will continue to adhere to the mandates set forth at the local and state levels, regarding the reconvening of church services and our Phase I guidelines.