

A LETTER FROM DR. SEAN LUCAS

May 28, 2020

My dear Friends:

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you this coming Sunday. We have been working very hard to make sure that our processes and spaces will be ready to receive you back on campus. And that gets me toward what I wanted to mention to you today—namely, while there will be much that will be familiar, this coming Sunday will be different for all of us.

The most obvious difference will be how we are seating you in the sanctuary—namely, we are seating every other pew on the ground floor of the sanctuary and we are reserving the balcony for those who are more at-risk. That means you may not be sitting where you normally do and that you may not be able to come five or ten minutes after the service begins and find a seat in the sanctuary. One thing that will help all of us is to plan on getting to church five to ten minutes prior to the service so that you can be seated in the sanctuary.

Another difference is that we are really encouraging you to go outside to fellowship with one another as quickly as you can. This Sunday's weather looks like it will be glorious, so going outside will be pretty easy, I think. The reason, though, we need you to vacate the worship spaces is this will allow us to get to work cleaning those spaces for the next worshippers. We won't be offering our coffee bar through the summertime (so caffeinate before you get to church), but we do hope you will visit outside.

Obviously a third difference will be that we are not offering nursery or children's church through the summertime. And so, if you plan on being on-campus for worship, please prepare to assist your children in worship. And a final difference, of course, is that we are strongly encouraging us all to wear masks while you are here and especially during the service as we sing together.

All of this is different and uncomfortable. We need to name that reality and be ready for it. And that's why I want to ask you again to be patient and gracious with each other as we walk through the coming days. We will learn things from this coming Sunday that will allow us to tweak our processes going forward through the summer; and we will be building things back into our life together—like communion, for example, which will also require some adjustment. While these are the interim accommodations necessary to worship together, they are only interim; and I trust you feel, as I do, they are worth it so that we might gather once again around Word and sacrament as God's people in our beloved sacred space. I'm looking forward to it—I hope you are as well.

In the grip of God's grace,



P.S. I want to stress once again: if you are feeling poorly in any way or if you are nervous about coming at this time, please join us via Livestream at either 8:30 or 11 a.m. at ipcmemphis.org. We want you to feel free to follow God's leading and your conscience as you navigate this strange season in our life together.