

Covid-19 Update from the Leadership of SOPC

2 Timothy 1:7

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Dear Friends of the Lord,

We continue to be inspired by the creative ways the churches of South Carolina have responded to the ongoing challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, including Seven Oaks. Your commitment to our mission of Loving our neighbor, Sharing the Gospel and our vision of Serving the world by creating disciples of Jesus Christ as well as your care for one another are evident in so many ways.

We are both individually and corporately searching and finding ways of living out this call to Christ, even when we cannot do what we are known for doing, being the hands-on servants in the world. Innovation has been key in our service and love for neighbor to which we say, job well done and praise God for your resiliency! The Lord is leading us through transition and it is of great joy that we have technology that enables us to gather on Sunday mornings as well as other times to hear God's Word, be in prayer, offer our gifts and grow together during this difficult time.

As of May 18th at our stated session meeting, SOPC will not reopen its facilities and grounds. We hope you and the community will understand and support this decision as we prepare for safe reentry into church life. We aim to keep you apprised of any changes as we move towards gathering.

This decision was made in consult with the Covid Task Force, and according to the latest guidance from public health officials and CDC. Seven Oaks Presbyterian Church is instead moving into a preparation phase for reopening. This means that we are planning and implementing actions that will allow for safer reentry into the use of the facilities, both inside and outside.

The Leadership of Seven Oaks has heard many who do not yet feel comfortable returning in person as well as others who are eager to be in community with one another. We support you in making the best decisions for yourselves and your families, encouraging you to each individually assess your risk factors and begin by taking small steps when re-engaging with your loved ones outside of the church, your peers and the larger world.

Even when the church doors are once again "open", this does not mean a return to business as usual. It is critical to recognize the importance of the safe and sanitary practices necessary once we return to church buildings. Worship will look different, incorporate different measures of safety, and even fellowship events will necessarily be creative upon our return. It is our wish to take precautions out of love of God, neighbor and each one of you so that we may meet again as safely as possible.

In this interim time of preparation, we know you will remain steadfast in finding ways to remain in community with your sisters and brothers in Christ safely. As people of faith who profess to follow Jesus Christ, we know that our call is to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

With ears open to hear how God is calling our congregation and hearts open to respond to that call, we embrace this opportunity to be a beacon of hope in a hurting world. We also renew our commitment to faithfully participate in the life of our congregation through our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness so that all may come to know and be transformed by the love, grace and mercy available through Jesus Christ.

Thank you for doing your part during this pandemic. Thank you for praying for your staff and team as they make difficult decisions, and thank you for loving neighbor, church, and world in the love of Jesus Christ.

Grace and peace,

Reverend Jana L. Creighton
Seven Oaks Session