

The Journey Home 2020

One of the things that has made the past few months so difficult for us as believers, is that we are made to *gather* and to *scatter*. We gather for fellowship and encouragement and then scatter to make much of Jesus Christ in our communities.

For much of 2020, our “gathering” has been stifled in order to protect the health of as many as possible. As we now look at a return home as a family of faith, there are some points we need to consider.

We Will Gather.

It is essential to our physical, emotional and spiritual well-being to be able to see faces of those who are on this journey of faith

We Will Gather Safely.

On any given week, our facilities are cleaned and prepared to minimize risks to all who gather. In this new season, we will be increasing and probably over-compensating to make sure that risk is minimized. We will do all **we** can and ask for you to do all **you** can.

We Will Gather Responsibly.

We will ask everyone to share the responsibility for making wise decisions. We have always encouraged: if you (or your child) is sick, please do not come and share germs. More than a suggestion, we need for everyone to take seriously that your sickness indeed puts others at risk.

How Will We Gather?

In much the same way that steps were taken as we scattered, steps will be key in our return.

Step One

Now until June 7 (Online and In-Home Worship)

We will continue to offer Online Worship, Connect Group and Discipleship opportunities. As the Shelter-In-Place order has been lifted, make every effort to engage with neighbors and those whom you can host for online opportunities. Remain intentional in building relationships with those whom God has placed nearest to you!

Step Two

During Step Two, we will begin offering on-campus worship opportunities, in accordance with guidelines from health authorities. There will **not** be on-campus Connect Group meetings on Sunday mornings for any age; however Student and Adult Connect groups are encouraged to find ways to connect and even serve in addition to regular online interaction.

Outdoor Family Worship - Sunday, June 7 @ 9:30am. (Weather Permitting)

Bring your lawn chair, blankets, bottled water, bug-spray and Bible! We will meet on the West lawn of the church for an outdoor celebration of worship. We will also honor our 2020 graduates during this time.

Beginning on Sunday, June 14...

Family Worship Services @ 9:00am and 10:45am.

- Family Worship means that all ages will be in worship together! We will have the Worship Center and Fellowship Hall set to accommodate social distancing. And the 10:45am service will be even more family-friendly with specials for the kids including some fun games and songs just for them!
- We are asking all members and guests to make reservations for the worship gathering they will attend. This allows us to prepare accordingly, making sure that we do not exceed the seating available for each service. To make reservations for worship each week, visit www.hbcwendell.com/countonme. Reservations may be made starting at noon each Wednesday for upcoming Sunday worship gatherings.
- During Step Two, online worship will be available on a slightly delayed schedule for those unable to attend in person. Online opportunities for Preschool, Children and Preteens will also continue.

Step Three

At this step our worship gatherings should increase in number with deference to guidelines for safety. Connect Groups and other small group activities may look more normal. Preschool and Children Ministries may remain limited.

Step Four

Gatherings for worship and small groups, including Preschool and Children's Ministries return to a regular schedule. Safety guidelines will likely remain to some degree.

NOTES FOR THE JOURNEY HOME

Parking

Parking will be as normal; please be aware of physical distancing even in the parking lot. Guests, we will have special parking for you near the building!

Greeters and Greeting

Everyone needs to practice physical distancing. Now this one is going to be hard...we are a bunch of hand-shakers, huggers, and close-talkers. Whether you are a rule-follower or don't really care for the rules, *please respect the space of others*. Elbow bumps, two-handed-waves and air high-fives are within reason; greeting one another with a holy kiss? Not so much. Hand sanitizing stations will be placed throughout the lobby. Please wear a mask at your own discretion.

Worship Times (Steps 2 & 3)

During our separation, we have asked you to gather as a family for worship. We will continue this as we return to our public gatherings. We will gather for "family worship" until we are able to resume normal children's connect groups. The Fellowship Hall adjacent to the Worship Center will be set up to allow families with young children the opportunity to participate in worship while allowing room for kids to move around. In addition, we are gearing the 10:45am worship service to engage kids with some fun elements such as games and songs they know.

Both rooms will be set with rows of chairs spaced 6' apart. We encourage worshipers to practice social distancing and allow sufficient space between one another. Rows will allow families to sit together.

How Will We Give?

The HBC family has been so amazingly faithful in this season of scattering. And as we gather, God will make the path for that faithfulness to continue and even grow. In recent months, our church family has been intentional in getting their gifts to the church. All the methods we have used - mail, office drop-off, online giving - will all still be acceptable avenues for giving. However, when we gather for worship, we will not pass an offering plate. There will be an offering box clearly marked to allow individuals to drop their offering while at church.

How Will We Go?

Few things are as fundamental to the DNA of disciples of Jesus (and to Hephzibbeans) as the desire to go to the nations proclaiming the good news! With many of our expected mission trips cancelled it is important to know that mission partnerships are **not** cancelled. In fact, our partnerships are even more essential than ever. As a church with so many missions partnerships we have a unique opportunity in that we have ministers of the gospel on the ground all over the world and, while we may not be able to go and labor alongside them right now, we can provide much needed support in the form of resources and prayer that will allow the Kingdom to be advanced even without our presence.

Rest assured, there will be a time when we get to **GO** again. Even prior to the pandemic our missions philosophy was not based on safety; we have always been required to weigh what we are willing to risk for the sake of gospel.

So we will go when...

- It is permissible by both our country and the countries in which we minister
- It is possible and practical based on logistics
- It is pertinent to our partners and the ministries that they need our assistance with

Until then, international travel is not the only means of obeying the command to "**GO.**" We are called to "go and make disciples of *all* nations." - and this includes *our* nation. We will be providing opportunities over the course of the summer to better engage our neighbors with the hope of Jesus Christ. And not just our physical neighbors, but all of those neighbors who call Wendell, Knightdale, and Zebulon home! We need to cultivate the same hunger and the same excitement for seeing lives changed at home as we do across the world, so stay engaged, stay available, and get ready to get bold!