



June 10, 2020

Dear PCOM Family,

There are few seasons in recent memory that have more dramatically highlighted our need for Christian hope and fellowship. God created the church to be an anchor of hope for seasons just like pandemics and societal upheaval. There is, of course, nothing that can shake our hope in Jesus. That hope remains, as Heb. 6:19 puts it, “an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.”

We have seen this hope in action in this season at PCOM as God has continued to raise up a spirit of creativity and resilience that has not only sustained us, but also brought about unmistakable signs of renewal as well. Our God has a unique knack for this: where there is unexpected difficulty and challenge, there are also hopeful signs of creativity and transformation.

I mention these deep truths as a way of framing an update on where PCOM is at in terms of re-opening our campus and in-person worship services. Our Session met late last week to consider the work of the campus re-opening task force and make decisions about how and when the PCOM church campus might re-open.

There is a desire among all of PCOM’s leaders to return to in-person worship as soon as it is clearly safe to do so. Even though we carry that desire in our hearts, the overall judgment of PCOM’s leaders is that it’s not obviously clear that we’ve reached that point of clear safety and it is one of our deepest desires that our worship not become a context that produces unnecessary risk. Even though to many it might feel like the pandemic is over, it [remains](#) the fact that new cases continue to trend upwards in Orange County, the all-time highs for new cases and deaths occurred only recently, and we do not know for sure what this summer will hold for the outbreak given the easing of social distancing.

In addition, our normal worship services combine several risk factors that make re-establishing them in a way that maintains both safety and the robust experience we have come to enjoy quite challenging given the state’s current recommendations:

- Enclosed air space.
- The state guidance against singing.
- The state guidance for the need to social distance and wear masks during worship.
- Safety during the passing of the Lord’s Supper, the passing of the offering, and other high touch aspects of worship.

Two other facts that influenced the elders’ discernment have to do with our campus and our staff:



- Our current campus technological infrastructure requires upgrades so that we can more effectively pursue a true hybrid strategy of a streamed service (for those who must stay at home) and a gathered service (for those who feel safe to gather).
- Because of this, our current digital ministry takes far longer to do well than many may realize. While we pursue these upgrades, we do not want to leave those who are most vulnerable without a viable worship option from home, nor risk staff burn-out if we pivot to both digital and in-person gatherings too quickly without adequate infrastructure.

With all of these factors in mind, the elders have settled on the following “digital plus” strategy as a plan for the summer (through Sept. 1), *though if things change dramatically we stand ready to adjust accordingly*. We believe this strategy will position PCOM for just the type of long-term renewal and creativity that I described above:

- Continue to focus on improving digital worship and fellowship
- Creatively explore outdoor fellowship and worship options as special events
- Prayer and care available on Zoom and phone, with in-person visits in an emergency
- Strategically invest in on-campus technological upgrades to prepare us for short-term agility and long-term fruitfulness
- Roll-out a new digital communications strategy, with an integrated website and app
- Encourage informal social gatherings among PCOM folks—at their homes or elsewhere—at their discretion
- Allow outdoor youth group gatherings immediately with safety precautions
- Campus will remain closed to outside events, with only staff allowed in office

As we continue this journey together, the Session would also like to hear from you on what is most important to focus on and how quickly we do it. Our desire is to work towards being able to meet you where you desire to be met. We’ve set up a survey—you can find it by clicking [here](#)—that will help us understand what you are hoping for as we move ahead. Please submit it by Wednesday, June 17 if at all possible.

We remain in this together, as one body committed to each other, and are grateful for your patience, generosity, and feedback during this season.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pastor Jackson', written in a cursive style.

Pastor Jackson