

Dear MBC,

After not being able to meet for 9 weeks, we believe it is time to gather again for corporate worship this Sunday, May 17! Our elders met last night to discuss this and are in unanimous agreement that we can meet again with the most recent executive order by the governor. In that order, she explained that not only are churches exempt from any penalty for meeting for public worship, but also that “No individual is subject to penalty under section 20 of this order for engaging in or traveling to engage in religious worship at a place of religious worship, or for violating section 15(a) of this order.” Though the stay at home order is still in effect until May 28, we believe this statement allows churches and its members to practice their First Amendment privileges. Therefore, we are planning to have an “in-person” worship service this coming Sunday, doing our best to adhere to the CDC guidelines for safe gatherings.

Here is where we need your help. We need to decide if we should have one or two services. Practicing social distancing, we will only be able to have 150 people in the building at a time (50 in the auditorium, 50 in the upper level classrooms, and 50 in the lower level classrooms). If less than 150 people plan to attend this Sunday, we will only have one service at 9:30am. If more than 150 plan to attend, we will have two services (8:30 – 9:45 am and 10:45 am – 12:00 pm).

So, we are asking you to **respond no later than Thursday, May 14 at 9 am** to the following questions:

1. Do you plan to attend church this Sunday in person?
2. If so, how many are coming (children are welcome to attend but there will be no nursery or children’s classes provided)?
3. If we have two services, which service would you attend?

Please let Paula know your response to these questions via email (office@mbcni.org) or phone (616.784.5905 x10). Once we get this information back, we will send out all the details in a separate email on Thursday afternoon.

One other note...if you are experiencing any of these symptoms (cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea) we would encourage you to stay home. Additionally, while the decision to attend in-person worship services is up to you, those in a higher risk category (i.e. those over 65 years old and those with underlying medical conditions – including lung disease/asthma, heart conditions, diabetes, kidney or liver disease, and those immunocompromised) should consider watching the services via livestream rather than risking exposure.

Looking forward to seeing you face to face!!

Todd Dykstra
Teaching Pastor, Maranatha Bible Church