



24 ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS AS WE ARE WELCOMING YOU BACK!

Last week we all received good news: The country is going to slowly reopen and that includes houses of worship.

But if you think we'll all rush back to church and pick up where we left off, don't kid yourself—it's not going to happen. Or at least it *shouldn't* happen. Why? We need to add precautions to ensure everyone's safety.

We need to think and plan carefully, so we don't endanger people simply because we let our guard down and believe that the coronavirus crisis has passed.

As believers let's agree to live by faith and not operate in fear, but let's also agree to be proactive and to act in wisdom towards OUR members and guests, especially those among us who are most susceptible to becoming infected with COVID-19.

We have had a short time to prepare for the return of the church to the church campus, yet we are confident that every base is covered. As I've thought about our church and listened to friends and ministry experts over the past several weeks, I've compiled a list of things that we've thought about. We have determined not to let the excitement of finally coming back together cloud your judgment or cause us to ignore the challenge before us.

One thing is for sure IT'S TIME TO COME HOME! And I am excited about our Homecoming Services Beginning May 30th-31st.

Love you & See you soon,
Pastor Darnell West

Let's talk through some issues before the church returns to the building this Sunday:

1. IS OUR WORSHIP GATHERING INITIALLY LIMITED TO NO MORE THAN 100 PEOPLE?

No. Our governor hasn't limited our worship gathering to a certain number of people or percentage. We are free to have as many people as we want in our building if we are observing social distancing.

2. HOW ARE WE REVISING OUR SERVICES TO ALLOW FOR SOCIAL DISTANCING?

Physical gatherings are not limited in size, but we are being cautious:

- For your comfort and protection, our North County and South County campuses will each have 2 Sunday morning worship experiences
- We have reduced our worship experience times to 45-60 minutes with a 15-30 minute "passing period" so worshipers can either go to a Small Group (such as a Next Step Class) or go home.
- We are encouraging people who are more concerned or vulnerable, to continue worshipping online
- We have removed some chairs from our sanctuaries to help people avoid close contact
- We have added space in the front and back of sanctuary chairs
- We have reduced the fellowship time between worship experiences



3. ARE WE OPENING ALL THE CAMPUSES AT ONCE?

THE ANSWER IS YES! Our mission is the city and not just parts of the city. Our Reopening will represent this truth. There will be 6 services a weekend instead of 4.

4. WHAT WILL OUR WORSHIP EXPERIENCES LOOK LIKE?

Our services will be powerful, but they will look a little different than before with shorter worship, teaching time and prayer.

5. ARE YOU GOING TO POSTPONE MID-WEEK SERVICES SUCH AS 1ST WEDNESDAYS, TEAM NIGHTS, MEALS AND BIBLE STUDIES?

We will continue to hold Mid-Week services on-line. Visit influencechurch.com to see a full schedule of any online events.

6. WHAT ARE WE DOING NOW TO SANITIZE AND STERILIZE OUR CHURCH BUILDING?

We've taken the time to wipe down all classrooms, especially those where children meet, because of the toys and other items they touch during the course of a Sunday or Wednesday class experience.

We have sprayed chairs with disinfectant and wiped doorknobs and handles. We will also disinfect in-between services.

7. WHAT'S THE STRATEGY TO CLEAN AND SANITIZE OUR CHURCH IN REAL TIME?

We have a team of people who will be in place to sanitize areas that are in use, like restrooms, after people come out, using disinfectants and alcohol.

8. WILL EVERYONE HAVE TO WEAR A MASK & GLOVES?

We ARE encouraging everyone to wear a mask, although it's not mandatory.

Our DREAM TEAM volunteers will wear a mask and gloves as they serve during all Influence Church's services, outreaches and events.

9. WILL MASKS, GLOVES AND HAND SANITIZER BE PROVIDED AT CAMPUSES?

Yes. These items will be provided in the entrance areas of each campus and there will be hand sanitation stations throughout the common areas.

10. ARE WE GOING TO CONTINUE OFFERING CHILDREN'S CHURCH?

For now, we will be practicing "Family Worship", this presents the most effective way to successfully practice social distancing and keep our children safe. So, bring your kids with you to the worship experience in the main sanctuary, practice physical distancing, and keep a close eye on your little ones.

11. WILL WE CONTINUE OFFERING ONLINE WORSHIP?

We've decided to continue our online campus until Jesus comes! We are gathering volunteers and even a pastor for the online campus so that we can expand that campus's ministry!

12. IS A PHYSICAL "PASS THE PLATE" OFFERING A THING OF THE PAST?

For now - YES. We are placing ushers at the back doors of the auditorium so worshipers can place their envelopes, cash, or checks into offering buckets as they are exiting the service. Ushers will be wearing the protective gear.



13. WHAT ADJUSTMENTS WILL WE MAKE TO THE LORD’S SUPPER & BAPTISMS?

We will continue the practice of Holy Communion using self-contained juice and cracker cups.

Baptisms will be reduced in the amount of participants per event and will be reserved, for now, to those who are new believers or those wanting to take their Next Steps. We will wear masks and gloves as we engage in this practice.

14. ARE WE CONTINUING TO PROVIDE COFFEE STATIONS ON CAMPUS?

We may offer coffee and/or individually wrapped foods. Tables and chairs may be placed in storage for the time being so that people don’t congregate within a couple of feet of one another.

15. WHAT IS THE PLAN FOR USING VOLUNTEERS?

We are prepared to use the volunteers who express interest in coming back during our early relaunch days. Those who desire to wait are free to wait until they feel safe. All believers are encouraged to be safe but continue in the mission of Jesus and His church.

16. WILL GREETERS DO THEIR JOBS DIFFERENTLY, OR AT ALL?

The new normal for our greeters will be to stand back six feet, inside the church building and welcome people verbally without opening or holding the door for them. The previous way of greeting is not currently in line with good physical distancing practices given to us by the CDC and our state governments.

You experience this new style of greeting at big box stores now. A greeter is there to say hello, but they do not make you pass within a foot of them.

Our Influence Church greeters will welcome you with the same warm and friendly welcome you have become accustomed to, for now, it will be at a distance, with a wave and a smile.

17. HOW WILL WE GO FORWARD WITH VBS?

This is a burning question on church leaders’ and parents’ minds.

There are many ways to continue this, mostly through online venues, and we are going to find a new way to provide a VBS experience.

18. ARE WE SUSPENDING OR ENDING OUR CHURCH’S “MEET AND GREET” TIME?

Yes, temporarily, due to physical distancing rules.

This practice has been on the decline in recent days, and many churches have already abandoned it because of its ineffectiveness with guests, not because of COVID-19 concerns.

19. WHAT IS THE PLAN FOR EVENTS, SUCH AS NEXT STEPS CLASSES, THAT ARE LARGER GROUPS?

No one is going to want to sit in a crowded room for anything. We will continue to do our STEPS classes in smaller numbers and practice social distancing.



20. DO WE HAVE A PLAN FOR REDUCING EXPENSES IF OUR CHURCH'S OFFERINGS DON'T REBOUND?

We have used this as a time for a "budget scrub" while offerings are still decent but expenses have been a little higher.

Churches need to be thinking about the "what ifs," as in, "What if our offerings don't hold steady because of rising unemployment of members?" We have a "plan B" strategy just in case giving drops in late summer or early fall.

I have friends in ministry I deeply respect who believe we (the church) haven't felt the financial impact of COVID-19 like we will in the days and months ahead.

EVEN IF THEY ARE RIGHT GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF US! OUR CONFESSION OF FAITH IS THAT, WE WILL CONTINUE TO SOW AND DO MINISTRY IN OVERFLOW!

21. HOW WILL WE DEAL WITH THE RISE OF COVID-19 RELATED ADDICTIONS?

One mental health expert said in a webinar meeting last week, "I'm hearing that porn sites are giving away free memberships during COVID-19 ... just what people don't need."

In that same webinar last week on mental health, the presenter assured the audience that substance abuse is on the rise, too. Alcohol sales are soaring. He cautioned us to be ready to do lots of counseling and referring of people to professionals in our post-COVID 19 reality.

WE ARE BEING PROACTIVE IN DEVELOPING PHYSICAL AND ONLINE GROUPS THAT SERVE PEOPLE AFFECTED.

22. ARE WE INVESTING IN NEW DIGITAL EQUIPMENT RIGHT NOW?

Yes. We've hopped online and used Facebook LIVE, YouTube & Periscope to broadcast our worship services.

We've spent about \$10,000 on new equipment (because we didn't have the capacity) with another \$30,000 to go. If you'd like to give toward it please do.

Right now, it makes sense to invest dollars now so cameras and other equipment can be purchased that will help the church be more professional in the new online world of worship.

23. WILL A NEW STAFF OR VOLUNTEER POSITION EMERGE FROM COVID-19?

Because the church has permanently moved online now, it is leading to the adoption of a new position of leadership.

This has opened up opportunity for a virtual pastor whose job it is to oversee the technical and connection aspects of the new digital frontier?

24. ARE WE GOING TO CONTINUE HOSTING SPECIAL EVENTS?

We will continue to host weddings, funerals & Revivals with precautions in mind.



THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING

This list of questions is not exhaustive, it is representative of many things we are thinking about right now since we have the OK from government leaders to gather again.

What would you add to this list? What have I left out?

Let's pool our experience and wisdom to help Jesus' bride be prepared for the new world we find ourselves in.

I'd love for you to respond to this list and share your thoughts.

Influence Church cares and we are thinking and talking about these things.