

October 22, 2020

Dear Calvin Family,

Grace and Peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Since July, we have been operating on a “hybrid” worship schedule, with outdoor in-person worship on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, and online focused worship on the 2nd and 4th Sundays. And whereas when we began online services they had to be prerecorded, edited, and then posted online, we are now able to live stream Sunday worship on our Facebook page from the Sanctuary. The benefit of this – which many of you have noted – is that it helps to recreate a sense of community in a time when our normal modes of community are disrupted. When you worship via the live stream, you are doing so in real time with those in the sanctuary leading the service, and with all in your Calvin family who are worshiping in the same way and at the same time as yourself. Is it ideal? No. Is it good and valuable? Absolutely! Added to this, and while these services are still focused on the worship experience of those worshiping at home, in September we were able to responsibly allow for a limited number of worshipers to come and worship in-person while it was being live streamed.

Additionally, our outdoor worship services have been wonderful. Worshiping outside has allowed many of us to gather together for worship, albeit in a socially distant manner and with masks. However, the seasons are changing and colder weather is moving in.

The church Session has made the decision that beginning in November, all Sunday worship services will be indoors from the Sanctuary and live streamed on our Facebook page at 10:30am each Sunday. We will continue to have limited attendance options at these services, and will looking to rearrange the sanctuary a bit to better accommodate this. This is our schedule through March 28th, after which time we will be reevaluating where we are with regard to both our circumstances and the weather.

The final component of this is our celebration of the Lord’s Supper. While the larger outdoor services on the first Sundays of the month allowed for this, it is not quite as easy when most of us are worshiping via the live stream from our homes. For Presbyterians and other Reformed Christians, the sacraments are never private, individual affairs. They are ways the body of Christ *as a body* both proclaims and has the signs of God’s promises sealed on our hearts and in our lives. In the Supper, for example, in our partaking of the same cup and the same bread from the same table, we proclaim the oneness we have in our one Lord Jesus Christ, and that we are all welcomed to the same Gospel feast. We seek to celebrate this sacrament in both spirit and in truth.

These are unusual times and difficult circumstances. Therefore we have discerned a way that we believe is faithful to both the spirit and the truth proclaimed in this sacrament. We will

continue to celebrate the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of each month, using the same wafer and cups we have been using since the summer. For those who are worshipping in-person on those Sundays, it will be much like it was at our outdoor services.

And for the vast majority who are worshipping at home via the live stream of the service:

We will have a package for each family unit with the appropriate number of servings for your family that may be picked up at the church in the weeks leading up to the beginning of each new month. If you are unable to pick yours up, let us know and we will make sure they are delivered to you. You are then invited to have those elements with you when you join in the live stream worship service on the first Sunday of the month.

Like many things, this is not ideal. However we believe this allows us to accommodate our present circumstances while still being a reminder and that we are all sharing and partaking of the same cup and the same bread. We trust that in this the Good News of Jesus is proclaimed and received in the spirit and truth of the Gospel. And as in all things, we trust that God's grace and love abounds.

A final note on this. We are also aware that there are those in our church family who are not able to join in worshipping online, and some for whom even having visitors is not possible. We will continue to mail out the weekly worship liturgies, and if you would like to partake of Communion, please contact me so that we can work with your circumstances.

This update became much longer than I had planned; thank you for spending the time reading. I know there is a lot here, so here is the summary:

- All Sunday services November 1-March 28 will be live streamed from the sanctuary at 10:30am at this web address: **[www.Facebook.com/CalvinPresbyterianRI/live](https://www.facebook.com/CalvinPresbyterianRI/live)**
- Limited in-person attendance is available. You must RSVP on our website or by calling the church office for each service you would like to attend (please see our website for more information about in-person worship attendance).
- Celebration of the Lord's Supper will be during worship on the first Sunday of each month. For those worshipping at home, you may pick up your family's Communion elements at the church (or contact us for other arrangements) in the weeks prior to each new month.
- For those unable to access the worship live stream, but who would still like to participate in Communion, please contact Pastor Kevin.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Kevin