

## COVID-19 Update

To our brothers and sister in Christ and our beloved community

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, Governor Gavin Newsom issued a statewide stay at home order to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. In compliance with the local, state, and national officials, we made the difficult decision to close our doors and strictly limit our services to online only. For 11 weeks, our church held online services.

On Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, United States Attorney General William Barr issued a statement stating: “The first amendment and federal statutory law prohibit discrimination against religious institutions and religious believers.” On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, President Trump “called upon the governors to allow churches or places of worship to open. If they don’t, he will override the governors.”

As a church we sought to do the best we could with presenting an online service to those in our congregation. We are grateful for technology, but also realize we as people were not created to be isolated.

May 31<sup>st</sup>, Gray Ave. Christian Church opened the doors on Pentecost Sunday, one of the most sacred days in the Christian faith. The church did so with wisdom, safety and public health at the center of our priorities. We encouraged social distancing and wearing a face mask, along with installing hand sanitizers and keeping all doors open.

As of July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom stated at his press conference that 30 California counties would have to close indoor church services (house of worship) and will only be allowed to conduct outdoor services with social distancing. The economic, social, and mental impact of this order is yet to be realized, however, it is estimated to be devastating.

*We believe that the local church serves a critical role in mental health, spiritual, and community throughout our communities, as affirmed by our justice department and executive branch of government.*

As elders and church board, we have made the courageous decision to remain open, holding service indoors, while still maintaining all CDC guidelines of social distancing, mask wearing, temperature taking, and sanitation to continue out of care for the people of our church and community.

Our mandate is to obey the Word of God. While some may think we are being careless or reckless, we have spent time talking and praying on what God’s will is for Gray Ave. Church. We do not expect everyone to agree with our stance, however we firmly believe this is the time for our church to stand up. As we stand together as a community, we choose to live in faith over fear.

*2 Timothy 1:7 "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."*