

DISCUSSION OF DECISION TO RE-OPEN CHURCH FOR IN-PERSON WORSHIP AND OTHER GATHERINGS.

1. List 3-4 values that will guide us in decision making (7-10 minutes)

- a. Consider what values Emmanuel's mission statement of "Following Christ, Sharing the Truth, Serving Others" might point to.

2. Consider some of the data that is available through [CovidActNow](#).

- a. Current infection rate in Maricopa County 1.25
 - i. This is ranked as high by CovidActNow and suggests that the total number of infections is increasing. Most experts recommend that the rate be below 1.0 for two weeks before reopening.
- b. Positive test rate is 4.5% for State (no data specific to the county).
 - i. This is ranked as medium, which indicates that the availability of tests is improving.
- c. ICU capacity is at 18%
 - i. This is ranked as low and suggests that Arizona has adequate resources to meet a surge if one occurred.

3. Consider the theories about virus transmission and effective methods for reducing transmission.

- a. Evidence strongly suggests people are infected by touching droplets that land on surfaces and then touching their face.
- b. Evidence strongly suggests that people can be infected by airborne particles from sneezes and coughs.
- c. Evidence suggests that people may be infected by extended exposure to airborne particles from talking and singing.
- d. Evidence suggests that the risk of infection can be calculated by the amount of airborne virus particles + length of time of exposure (a group of 10 people in an enclosed space talking for 1.5 hours vs. 20 minute shopping trip in a warehouse size building with 50 people).
- e. Evidence strongly suggests that washing hands, not touching face, not shaking hands, and keeping 6 feet distance between people significantly reduces transmission.
- f. Evidence suggests that disinfecting high touch surfaces regularly reduces transmission.
- g. Evidence suggests that increasing air exchange in a room reduces exposure to virus particles.
- h. Evidence suggests that wearing masks lowers the amount of virus shedding from sneezing, coughing, and speaking (one report indicates that it does not significantly reduce virus shedding when singing).

- 4. Consider the risks/rewards (that is, the risk of spreading the infection vs. the rewards of re-opening).**
- a. Our church is an important source of emotional, spiritual and social interaction for many of our members.
 - b. If our community bonds begin to erode this can result in a loss of financial and volunteer resources.
 - c. Our mission is to share the good news of the Gospel. How does a lack of in-person contact affect this mission?
 - d. Our mission is also to be the body of Christ for each other and the world. How does the risk/reward question factor into the effectiveness of that mission.
 - e. Church populations tend to be vulnerable (over 60 years old), and church-related activities tend toward high transmission rates (talking, singing, passing items, long-engagement, physical touch).
 - f. Government officials and business leaders decisions' must balance economic well-being with public health concerns. Family decisions are different, prioritizing the personal health of its members above all else. Where on that spectrum does our decision lay in terms of the risk/reward?
 - g. Are we equipped to notify the congregation if someone becomes infected? What effect would that have the congregation and the level of social trust?
 - h. How do we communicate to the congregation that our decisions are well thought out and trustworthy?
 - i. If a large portion of our congregation cannot join us, how does that affect our worship.
- 5. As we consider these issues, how do we answer the question of when should we begin the process of re-opening?**