

COVID-19 UPDATE: August 24, 2021

COVID-19 continues to pose real dangers and to necessitate thoughtful and innovative practices on the part of the church. By God's grace we have done well while enduring this tragic pandemic. However, we are still facing a very powerful virus. Here are some bits of information and guidance:



Extreme Caution Is Still Necessary:

We prudently suspended our physical assemblies, starting on March 15, 2020, recognizing, even then, that this virus necessitated that we initiate abundant precautions. We followed the science – guidance from the CDC, from the community's top epidemiologists and from knowledgeable physicians within the congregation. This resurgent virus continues to debilitate and take lives. Over 630,000 lives have been taken in our country by COVID-19. On average, 1,057 people per day have passed away due to the virus in the recent seven days in the U.S.A. Therefore we continue to have absolute resolve in our commitment to keeping members safe and healthy. We encourage members to continue to take all of the recommended precautions, including vaccinations, for avoiding illness and preventing transmission of the virus to others.

1. Genuine Worship: *In-Person: Genuine Worship* is indispensable. Return to in-person worship is gratifying. God expects and deserves our sincere and authentic worship. Although we resumed in-person worship on June 20, 2021, we do so with great vigilance. Thanks to God, we have assembled safely. Consistency in wearing masks, socially-distanced seating and advanced sanitization before and after each gathering have facilitated our gatherings. These measures will continue to be strictly adhered to in hopes that we will be able to continue to assemble safely. Although we know that each of these provisions are very helpful, we cannot guarantee that these measures will fully protect everyone. We are continuing to monitor all aspects of this and will make refinements to scheduling and protocols if needed.

Live Streamed: We encourage those who cannot attend in-person worship due to age, underlying health conditions or discomfort with in-person worship to be faithful and genuine in participation via streamed worship. As we did prior to COVID, we continue our live-streamed services at 9:15 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. As we monitor our outreach and following, we note that in a recent 27-day span we reached 11,426 *different* people/devices just through Facebook. We are also viewed via YouTube and Church Streaming. We estimate that we are reaching approximately 20,000 *different* people monthly. Glory to God!

2. Studying God's Word: We continue to have a good selection of Wednesday classes, conducted virtually, for all ages as well as a Tuesday 11:00 a.m. adult class. We look forward to the time when we can effectively resume Sunday classes. Our on-line Bible Correspondence Course is available through our website. We urge every member to engage in a structured bible study. Remember, *Studying God's Word* is an essential part of church culture. It is vital to our spiritual health, individually and collectively.

3. Loving One Another: Jesus' declaration that we are known as His disciples by our love for one another (John 13:35) is by no means diminished by the pandemic. Our 6:00 a.m. prayer phone line (712)-775-7465 – access code 256138), noon prayer via Facebook and email (Prayer_Request@SchraderLane.org), are here to keep us connected and served through prayer. The prayer phone line is active following worship services on Sundays. Information and requests may be left on our office email and office phone voice messaging at any time. Our zone calling network, mass texting and

Support Group virtual meetings are fully active to ensure our ability to remain well connected and active in loving one another.

4. Leading Others to Christ:

Baptisms and additions to the congregation continue, regardless of the pandemic. This year God has added 24 new members to the congregation (10 baptisms and 14 placed membership). We will lead many more to Christ by encouraging obedience to the Gospel. Please make it a point to be active in this responsibility. There is no doubt that we can do more. Thank God for those who continue to lead others to Christ.

5. Giving and Engaging in the Work of the Church:

Thank you for your continued generous attention to giving. Offerings remain very closely aligned to budget. Expenses remain well controlled and aligned with priorities. Our giving enables us to carry on the work of the church's operating expenses, benevolence, missions, and necessary subsidization of key outreach ministries. We are grateful to deacons, ministry leaders, administrative staff and other members who are innovative in overseeing a variety of ministries and programs associated with facilities, functions and finances. We are making arrangements to provide assistance to the people of Haiti following the devastating earthquakes there. Thank God for your part in enabling the work of the church.

6. Impacting the Community:

Our outreach to community has been especially strong during the pandemic. Food gifts have fed the equivalent of over 1,000 people, other benevolent provisions remain active. Activism against social inequities and efforts to uplift the underserved continue. Continued leadership by our Schrader Care Ministry has brought vaccinations to our campus and provided critically informative webinars to guide us in decisions relative to COVID, vaccines and other health matters. Now that schools have reopened, we anticipate more opportunities to serve the community. **Yes, we are responding to the urgent needs of the people of Haiti and to the needs of Middle Tennessee flood victims.**

THANK YOU: Let's remain diligent in keeping safe health practices as we assert ourselves in *genuine worship, studying God's Word, loving one another, leading others to Christ, engaging in the work of the church and impacting our community.* Thank you for the way you are staying well connected with us, with one another and with God. May God be with you. May God bless the Schrader Lane Church of Christ.

Robert