

Dear Church,

At SonRise Bible Church we care about the well-being of our people and our surrounding community. We also believe, however, that meeting together is important for the church to continue to be the body of Christ.

Hebrews 10:24-25 says, *"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."*

Though missing a few Sundays here and there is not a habit, perpetually failing to meet together on an ongoing basis is. We are encouraged by scripture to encourage one another all the more as the Day approaches. In other words, as things get worse as the Day of the Lord approaches, meeting together becomes even more important, not less.

That said, our desire is to continue to meet together, but to do so in a way that promotes unity among the believers, demonstrates love for God and one another, and recognizes the sovereignty of God over all things (including the civil authorities). *Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. (Romans 13:1)* We believe that God is sovereign over all things, both good and bad. In addition, we value the sanctity of life from fetus to elderly. When considering issues of health and safety, we are not callous regarding the lives of others but seek to promote physical, emotional and spiritual health and growth. For this reason, we have made decisions about meeting during the Covid-19 pandemic to the best of our ability with the best information we have had and with scripture as our guide. In May, we were one of the first local churches to have Drive-In Services. We then moved to outdoor services on our church property. Then, to encourage additional social distancing, we moved the outdoor service to Veteran's Park, across the street from the church. We are seeing new people at church on a regular basis and by meeting outside, have been able to minister to more people than ever before. I believe the blessings of God upon us are an indication that God is at work at SonRise. It's a great time to be a part of this family.

Ephesians 4:1-6 - *As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ²Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

Though we have not had an indoor Sunday church services since the Illinois lock-down in March, we are soon approaching a time when the weather will not permit us to continue to meet in the Park. Therefore, the following will be how the family at SonRise Bible Church will move forward to promote unity, facilitate worship and express love for one another. This plan is not meant to "make everyone happy", but to facilitate parameters and order within the church family in these unprecedented time when parameters and order are necessary from the church's leadership.

²³Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:23-25 NIV)

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ² Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. ⁴ For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. ⁶ This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. ⁷ Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. (Romans 13:1-7 NIV)

Though true Christian churches have some things universally in common, such as salvation through Christ alone, they also have some freedom in how they express that worship. Some churches meet in theaters. Some say the Lord's prayer every week. Some meet multiple times a week and some use drums. These differences are fine because they allow the church to minister to many different types of people. It's also one of the reasons God has placed leadership over His body (the church). Leaders in the individual churches are given by God for equipping and building up the body or Christ.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds^[c] and teachers,^[d] ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood,^[e] to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:11-16).

Though there are many different views and opinions regarding the severity and danger of Covid-19 the leadership of SonRise has looked at a number of factors.

- 1) What do we believe worship to be and what are Biblical mandates we must follow?
- 2) What is the exemption for churches in the Governor's executive order and what does it mean.
"This Executive Order does not limit the free exercise of religion. To protect the health and safety of faith leaders, staff, congregants and visitors, religious organizations and houses of worship are encouraged to consult and follow the recommended practices and guidelines from the Illinois Department of Public Health(3). . . "
<https://www2.illinois.gov/Pages/Executive-Orders/ExecutiveOrder2020-38.aspx>
- 3) What are the risks to ourselves and others associated with worshipping together?
- 4) How does the body at SonRise assess the risks and rewards associated with worshipping a variety of ways?
- 5) How do we meet together in a way that allows as many as possible to worship together and still provide the freedom in the exercise of our faith?

WORSHIP PROTOCOLS

- The Worship Service will meet in our building for one service at 10am on Sunday Mornings.
- We estimate the full building capacity of both upstairs and downstairs to be near 250 total. We don't anticipate more than about 75 in the short term which would be around 30% of estimated capacity. There will also be separation provided by having multiple rooms (Sanctuary, Rotunda and Downstairs).
- The church will be cleaned prior to our service on Sunday Morning and after any Bible Studies during the week, including the Foyer, Sanctuary, Rotunda, Restrooms and Downstairs Meeting area.

- If you or anyone in your family is feeling sick, we ask that your entire family stay home and participate online. If you would like to have the pastor pray for you, he is willing to come to your home, anoint you with oil and pray over you. (James 5:14 - "Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.") Call or text 815-408-0087
- Social distancing of 6ft between families of different households is recommended and encouraged throughout the church. If you should choose not to social distance, we ask that you sit toward the front of the sanctuary together to allow for social distancing in the Rotunda area.
- Every other row of pews will be blocked off to further encourage social distancing.
- Masks are encouraged, especially for our more vulnerable family members, however at this time, we will leave the decision to wear a mask or not wear a mask up to the individual worshiper. We are one body with various views about Covid-19. Love one another regardless of their views or preference concerning Covid-19.
- We value the sanctity of human life and as such value the lives of our older, more vulnerable people. Be respectful how you communicate about Covid-19. Statements such as, "It only kills older people" can communicate a lack of value for our older people. We love them and value their lives.
- There will be live video on the screen downstairs where social distancing will be practiced.
- We encourage everyone to bring hand sanitizer to use, but we will have it provided at the entrances to the Sanctuary, Rotunda and downstairs entrance.
- Please be respectful of one another with regards to distancing when entering and leaving the service.
- For those meeting downstairs who would like to avoid concentrations of people, we will provide an entrance and exit through the downstairs kitchen.
- SonRise Kidz will not meet in October but will be evaluated on a regular basis.
- We will use individual pre-packaged communion.
- Services will be broadcast live for those who would rather watch online at [SonRiseBibleChurch.com/live](https://www.SonRiseBibleChurch.com/live) and on Facebook Live.
- State of Illinois Executive Order 2020-38 states "This Executive Order does not limit the free exercise of religion. To protect the health and safety of faith leaders, staff, congregants and visitors, religious organizations and houses of worship are encouraged to consult and follow the recommended practices and guidelines from the Illinois Department of Public Health(3). . . " <https://www2.illinois.gov/Pages/Executive-Orders/ExecutiveOrder2020-38.aspx>. As these recommended practices and guidelines are not mandates that limit the free exercise of religion, we too ask each faith leader, staff, congregant and visitor to consider these recommendations as you exercise your faith at SonRise.
- SonRise Bible Church cannot prevent you or your family members from becoming exposed to, contracting, or spreading COVID-19 while on our property. Therefore, if you chose to enter the premises, properties, or facilities, or attend an in person service at or with SonRise Bible Church, you may be exposing yourself to and or increasing your risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.
- This plan is fluid and for a time. We will make adjustments as we go along.