



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCA)

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August 13, 2020

Dear Beloved in Christ Jesus and Saints of God,

Every Lord's Day is an occasion of joy for God's people because as the First Day of the Week rolls around again we are reminded afresh: "Christ is risen; He is risen indeed." Our Lord's resurrection vindicates His claims and assures us of our justification before God because His sacrifice on our behalf has been received by the Father in Heaven.

This Lord's Day in particular is a special one because not only do we return to united, corporate worship in the **Lord's Day morning at 10:45 a.m.** and **Lord's Day evening at 6:00 p.m.**, but we will come together to sit at the Lord's Table as part of evening worship.

This observance of the Supper will feature some reforms aimed at bringing our practice more closely in line with the way the Saviour instituted this meal. You can read about those in last week's letter if you haven't already; it's still available on the church website.

Our observance of the Supper will also be a bit different from normal because of our present public health circumstances. The elders will be masked and gloved as we come around to serve you and - instead of serving individuals - we will serve families by placing the communion elements on a plate for each pew. To make this easier for us, we ask that families and households sit together in the pews.

We will, of course, have instructions this Lord's Day evening to help the communion go smoothly. But there will undoubtedly be some confusions and mixups, so please bear with us. Mixups as we come again to the Table will be yet another reminder of our need of Christ's righteousness to stand in God's presence! Thank God His Son has offered perfect worship for us.

One other thing I want to mention is that coming to the Lord's Table is - in large part - a matter of individual conscience. While there is grave spiritual danger in ignoring the command of Christ to "*do this in remembrance of me*" for a long period of time, there are seasons in a Christians life in which she or he may not feel ready to commune at the Table. For that reason, we don't want to pressure anyone to commune at this time if you don't believe you're ready to do so yet. But we do nonetheless encourage you to participate in worship with us and simply signal the elders when we come by that you will not be communing this time.

I look forward to worshipping with you in word and sacrament this Lord's Day. If you've been reluctant to return for worship, this may be an excellent occasion for you to join us again in person as we come together to participate anew in the emblems of Christ's suffering. To that end, I've put some Scriptures and other sentences to aid our preparation for the Supper on the back of this letter. I hope they will encourage you.

Your servant for Christ's sake,

Ryan Biese,
Pastor

1 Corinthians 10:16–17, *The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.*

Westminster Larger Catechism No. 168, *The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, his death is showed forth; and they that worthily communicate feed upon his body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace; have their union and communion with him confirmed; testify and renew their thankfulness, and engagement to God, and their mutual love and fellowship each with other, as members of the same mystical body.*

Westminster Larger Catechism No. 171, *They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance; love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.*

Matthew 11:27–30, *All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

John 10:14–17, *I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again.*

Ephesians 4:11–16, *And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 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. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 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.*

Heidelberg Catechism No. 81: Who are to come unto the table of the Lord? *Those who are displeased with themselves for their sins, yet trust that these are forgiven them, and that their remaining infirmity is covered by the passion and death of Christ; who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and amend their life. But the impenitent and hypocrites eat and drink judgment to themselves*