



June 21, 2021

Dear Central Family:

The last 15 months have taken us on quite a journey. From that moment in March 2020 when we realized we were going to all-virtual worship, to celebrating Easter with no one in the worship venues, to learning a new rhythm of worshipping at home, to stepping back into in-person worship in a limited manner last summer and this spring, to now seeing face coverings not be so prevalent, these have certainly been uncharted waters for all of us. We cannot adequately express how grateful we are for your willingness to be flexible and full of grace as we have navigated our way through the pandemic.

These past few months, several of our key staff and lay leaders along with our new senior pastor, Rev. Carness Vaughan, have been meeting regularly to conduct strategic planning for the next steps in our journey ahead. The results of this process were presented to the Church Council over two meetings with the Council ultimately voting to enact some changes and initiatives that we pray will best position us for the season ahead.

We are very excited to announce a few of the key actions taken by the Church Council, including a new worship schedule for the Dickson Street campus beginning on Sunday, August 1 and plans to livestream both the classic and contemporary services. The new Sunday schedule will be as follows:

9:15 – Contemporary Worship in the Activities Center (both in-person and livestream)

10:00 – Life Classes for all ages (formerly known as Sunday School)

10:00 – A new adult Pastor’s Class in the Activities Center

11:00 – Traditional Worship in the Sanctuary (both in-person and livestream)

This new schedule allows for every person who attends on campus to not only worship but also grow through discipleship, with a designated discipleship hour. It also allows for one preacher, primarily the Senior Pastor, to be able to preach throughout the morning, regardless of the venue. Below you will see a few questions we anticipate some of you will have along with responses that we hope will be helpful.

Q. What about the early morning traditional service and the late morning contemporary service?

A: Although we would love to start back in the fall where we left off in March 2020, realistically we know that it could take a while to get back to that level of attendance. So, initially having just one service in each worship space allows us time to gain some momentum. We definitely want to be in the place where we need to add more services and we see this new schedule as just the beginning.

Q: When might we consider adding services?

A: Both of our Dickson Street worship centers seat approximately 625. We believe when we are regularly at 2/3 capacity or more that we should initiate the steps to increase service options. When that time comes, we expect to be adding a 9:15 classic service and an 11:00 contemporary service to our Sunday schedule.

Q: How will the new life classes timeframe work?

A: Since 1998, when the first Sunday morning contemporary worship service was held at Central, we have not had a window for discipleship classes that did not bump up against worship services. The new schedule provides us an opportunity to focus renewed energy into growing and developing our faith walk. It also allows for an approximate gathering/transition time of 10:00-10:10 and learning period of 10:10-10:50.

Q: How will the new pastor's class work?

A: It will be held in the Activities Center and be led by the clergy team at Central. This is a great class for any adults who are not otherwise engaged in one of our life classes. The new class will commence on Sunday, August 1, with a short-term study on developing and enhancing your prayer life, going through the month of August. Beginning, September 5, this class will begin studying *The Story*.

Q: What are we going to be doing in worship and life classes over the upcoming school year?

A: Beginning Sunday, September 5, almost all our life classes including the pastor's class will begin a church-wide study called *The Story*. This 31-week journey will take us through the stories of the Bible week by week. All age levels in the church will be studying the same materials at an age-appropriate level each week. The weekly sermon will also correlate and provide us with biblical insights coupled with practical applications for our daily lives. We will take a break from *The Story* during Advent and then complete it in mid-May 2022. Each lesson is standalone so if you miss a week, you won't be lost.

Q: How will childcare work?

A: At Central, we believe that it is a privilege for parents to train their children in the spiritual discipline of corporate worship. By sitting with their kids in worship services, parents not only model worship for them, but they also communicate that kids are never too young to hear from the Lord in church. For those times when family worship is not possible, we will begin offering childcare this fall for ages K-1st grade on the first floor of the education building during both worship services. We will also provide assistance in transferring children K-1st grade between childcare and their life classes. Infant through pre-K will continue to be offered on the first floor of the student ministries building.

In closing, we acknowledge that no Sunday morning schedule is perfect, including the one we had prior to the pandemic. And we are confident that the lessons learned from the pandemic regarding adaptability and flexibility that we have all had to employ will help us move forward together. As we move into this new season in the life of our church, may we all place our trust in our Lord as He guides us through the journey before us.

Together in Christ!!

Sally Davis
Church Council, Chair

Catherine Templeton
Lay Leader