



August 24, 2020

Dear SOTV Family:

We are living through an unprecedented time, though not a time that should surprise us as Christ-followers living in a broken world. A pandemic, racial struggles, political polarity, a derecho, and now two hurricanes approaching the southern border of our country are 'signs' that our Savior will be returning soon! And, as we await His return, we as the Shepherd of The Valley family will not sit idly by. We are the Church, and we will continue to be the Church in our facility, our neighborhoods, our places of work, and in our schools. We will encourage one another, disciple and be discipled, serve and love the Lost around us, worship, and be transformed by the life-giving Word of our God.

Thus far, our return to worship in our building (traditional, contemporary, Hispanic, and Eritrean) while still extending our reach through online avenues, has been successful thanks to your prayers, support, and understanding. If you've not made it back to the building for worship, we very much look forward to seeing you soon. We began receiving communion once-again as a community the last few weeks. We are excited to begin offering more opportunities for you all to gather and grow here at Shepherd of The Valley, while still offering other online opportunities.

As we, as a staff, have been preparing for your return, there have been several issues we have had to keep in mind:

1. The safety of our community, especially those in "high-risk" categories.
2. That we have an adequate number of staff and willing volunteers to offer safe and effective ministry opportunities.
3. Whatever we do, we must be sure to meet the requirements the government has mandated to keep our Shepherd's Flock school operational.

With these things in mind, our leadership have prayerfully come up with what we believe is the best plan for the SOTV family for this fall. We will, of course, be constantly meeting to consider the way forward as we move closer to 2021.

Preschool through Grade 12:

Wednesday nights will be solely for grades 5 to 12. Pastor Lincon may have a small group of people, but the main focus is for youth. NO BLAST for younger children!

- August 26 is the JAM and Confirmation parent and youth meeting at 6:30 p.m. in the worship area. Wear a mask – families will be socially distanced.
- Classes will start on Wednesday, September 9, at 6:30 p.m.

Sunday mornings will be only for grades 4 and younger. Milestone Ministries will still happen at this time. Also, there may possibly be a parent class in the gym.

- September children's Sunday School will be an email for family story time. Thanks, Tina Ridgely, for planning this! This allows the school year to start before we start meeting in person.
- October 11 we will start all classes from 9:15 – 10:15 a.m.
- 3rd grade Bible Classes (Milestone Ministry) will be October 11, 18 & 25.
- Communion Preparation Classes (Milestone Ministry) will be November 1, 8 & 15. (6th graders and parents)
- Sunday Evening Girl's Bible study for grades 7-12 at 5 p.m.

High School Ministry Opportunities:

Our high school youth will plan to meet on Wednesday evenings after Labor Day on-site either outdoors or in the youth room. Continue to watch the Group Me app for all information and details each week. Contact Angie if you are not getting these messages.

We will NOT meet on Sunday mornings, but youth may volunteer to help with younger kids' Sunday School classes -- email Marilyn@sotv-wdm.org if interested.

Adult Education:

Staff are still working on adult education. We have numerous groups meeting throughout the week, and we hope to offer more small groups in-person or on Zoom.

Pastor John David's daily devotions will continue Monday-Thursday (Mark Rowley leads a devo on Fridays) at 7:30 a.m. If you do not have the Zoom link for these meetings, please call Diane Green at the church office.

We will have opportunities for adults to gather at the SOTV facility outside of the Sunday morning and Wednesday evenings (LWML, Precept groups, etc...) Our goal is to keep people as safe as we can by limiting the number of people in the building, but still get people together in person if they desire. Also, we have numerous COVID guidelines for teachers and classroom use. Specific instructions will be provided at a later date.

Though we will not offer an adult class in our facility, other than a possible class for parents, on Sunday mornings we are looking to offer a study through Zoom. More information will be coming soon.

Saturday Evening Worship:

We will, once-again, begin offering a worship service on Saturday evenings at 5:00 p.m. beginning September 12. This service will be different than both our Sunday traditional and contemporary services. It will be a more contemplative and experiential service. We look forward to hearing your thoughts after you have worshipped with us at this service!

Realm:

SOTV encourages everyone with email to join Realm, a new kind of church database/recordkeeping that lives in the cloud. It will make it easier for our church family to connect with each other, keep up with what's going on, and grow as a connected community of believers. If you need a new invite by email with a link, please call Diane Green at the office, and she can send either instructions by email or walk you through it over the phone. It's not that difficult, so

ask for help. If you need help putting it on your smart phone, call Diane to make an appointment, please.

Preschool and Kindergarten Openings:

It's not too late! The Shepherd's Flock ELC has both preschool and half-day kindergarten openings for this coming school year. Schools starts after Labor Day on September 8. Our faith-based, quality educational experiences will take place in person with small classes and teachers with degrees in education. Important safety measures are in place to minimize exposure to COVID. Any questions and for more information, please contact Diane Hensley at 225-1952, ext. 114 or diane@sotv-wdm.org

Church Re-Visioning

Our SOTV Leadership Staff and the Christ-Based Leadership team are beginning a new visioning process for our church this Fall. Please keep these people in your prayers as we seek our Lord's guidance as we consider how and where He is leading us.

We will do our best to keep you informed should circumstances and plans change. It is especially important that we communicate often and well during this time. In any case, remember that Christ is victorious! We are baptized children of the living God, and nothing can separate us from His love. We have the great honor to represent Him in this world. We are not working for His victory, but from it!

In the Love of Our Savior,

Your SOTV Leadership Team