



# The Second Baptist Church

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Dear Members and Friends of Second Baptist Church:

Praying you are all well and feeling the love of God as real and present in your life as I write this day. There's been a lot of hustle and bustle around the church in recent days, at least compared to the last year or so in the pandemic. On Saturday, the Growth and Outreach Team hosted a luncheon for many of our Experienced Adult women to get together and see each other. And on Sunday, several volunteers for the role of Enhanced Usher gathered for training in preparation for a reopening to come. It was wonderful to gather with so many of you over the weekend. Remember the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 18: 20, "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." Whether a small gathering or a larger one, we can feel the presence of God with us if we just pause to notice. Thanks be to God!

## **Reopening Efforts:**



The hopeful news in our battle with COVID infections in Suffield continues! For a second straight week, Suffield's infection rates have fallen further into the zone which meet our metrics for reopening. This, however, is not the time to let down caution and care for each another in our thoughts and actions, for we do not want to lose the ground we've gained in recent weeks. So today, I hope to give you some ideas of what to expect as we reopen.

First, the success of our reopening in *maintaining health depends largely on YOU*.

Remember, many people have many different comfort levels: some would prefer to remain at home until this is over, some want to cautiously try in-person worship if it seems safe, and some have not been worried about in person worship. It's a spectrum – and to make sure that EVERYONE feels like they can safely come back, everyone needs to be taking safe actions, and they need to SEE it. In my social network, I have friends attending church all over the country. Many who have gone back have said things like, "After seeing how people were NOT social distancing at church yesterday, I think I have to keep doing online worship until it is safer." None of us want to be the reason someone doesn't feel safe in church, right?

**Let's do all that is in our personal power to demonstrate love of neighbor through masks and distance!**

When you arrive to in-person worship, you will need to *enter from one of two entrances* – the **parking lot level** entrance OR from the **front entrance up the steps**. The Welcome Center entrance will be off-limits for Sunday Services, except for worship staff. Ushers will be assisting with the traffic flow at many points. We ask you to remember that **patience** is a fruit of the spirit in this! We'll all be learning the pattern in the first couple of weeks back, so remember we're all in the same boat with that! At the end of the service, we will ask you to sit until the ushers dismiss your row. We are hoping this can help us keep things moving without bottlenecks.

Next, I'd like to talk about some key changes to the service. For the time-being, we will not be sharing microphones. Also, we want to keep the service brief, to minimize exposure to shared air. These two things mean that we'll need to have ***prayer requests ahead of time***, rather than shared in the service. Therefore, beginning in the middle of May, we will need to have your prayer requests ahead of time. To be mentioned in Sunday services, they will be due by Friday at 2 PM, via phone or email. To make the newsletter, I will need them by Tuesday at 9 AM each week.

Also, we are going to have a soloist sing the hymns for us each week, until the science becomes clearer around safe singing. The soloists will be fully vaccinated individuals, and will wear a mask, which should reduce risk significantly. You may find yourself wanting to move to the music, or hum along, and we ask that you will do this within your safely distanced space from each other.

Remember, our goal is to **make Second Baptist Church the EXCEPTION to the “Two-week Drop Off” Rule**. Since church researchers have noticed that people tend to drop-off following the first two weeks of reopening, we need to do what we can to help make sure that doesn't happen. Help others feel safe and secure because of your actions. Commit now to EVERY Sunday. If you've been longing for the rhythm of the 10:00 AM Sunday service in the Sanctuary, you are now instrumental in making sure that we can provide it, by *being there and being safe*.

## **Volunteer Opportunities:**



Would you like to get more involved in the services? Would you like to help make sure that we all stay connected and in touch with our church friends? There are three major ways YOU can help support the work of our faith community right now. We are need of:

- ***Scripture Readers*** for Worship Services (Please contact Len. He will pass your information to the Deacon in charge of arranging lay readers.)
- ***Calling Ministry Participants*** (Per the Deacons' initiative – more details follow in this letter)
- ***Enhanced Ushers*** – we have a great pool to start, but it would be great to have a bench so nobody gets burned out through *over*-committing. (Contact Becky, who is leading this effort). There is an upcoming training/refresher training coming on May 22.

Upcoming opportunities that will be needed for reopening:

- ***Instrumental Soloists***. Do you plan an instrument that doesn't super-spread? Guitar, violin, tuba, harp, clarinet, or the like? Do you like playing in front of people and sharing your gifts in a service that will be both live and on YouTube? If so, please let our Music Directors know.
- Anyone out there ***a liturgical dancer***? If so, I'd love to have a conversation with you about using your gifts in worship.
- ***"Cantors"*** – that is, vocal soloists to provide hymns during the service.
- ***Visual artists*** – let's have some conversations about how we might use your gifts in the service of God in our Sanctuary.

And, keep your ears open to opportunities to serve out in our community! We have several active, growing ministries (such as Missions and Green Team) who are seeking opportunities to do *more* in our surrounding communities. Let us know what you hear!



## The E-Word:



If you are anything like me, there are two major reasons behind commitment to church – God’s Amazing Grace and Love, and Our Personal Gratitude for that Love! To me, there is *no sweeter thing in my life than the opportunity to connect with that deep and abiding love each and every week*. Perhaps your two motivating factors are different than mine, but I want to invite you to think about them as we talk about evangelism this day.

What makes church *sweet* for you? What makes you crave the rhythm of worship each week, and how does SBC meet that for you? Would you want to share that feeling with others, the way you might invite them to taste one of the chocolates in the box? Why not reach out to someone this week, to see if they might like a taste of that thing that makes church sweet to you?

As always, I want to remind you to do the arm-chair evangelism of “like, comment, share” on social media. When you do this, our advertising reach increases organically. Your interaction will help make sure that our church’s information is visible to several others, sometimes in your circle, but also to people who have similar interests to you. Liking our church services on YouTube helps ensure that more people have the service “suggested” to them in their feeds. If you *believe* in this faith community, these little engagements can do much to help ensure we grow.

What ideas do you have for outreach and evangelism? Feel free to share them over the coming months.



## **The Ties That Bind Phone-calling Ministry**



If there were just one thing you could do to strengthen our church family, would you do it?

It just so happens that there is! You could join the *Ties that Bind* Phone-calling Ministry of SBC. We have been in lock-down mode for so long, and, perhaps, fearing that we may not be as connected as we once were. But, if you would be willing to commit to making one weekly phone call to an assigned household in our church family, you could make a significant contribution to our congregation's sense of belonging!

Please call Dian Kingsbury, and let her know that you would be willing to make a commitment to this new ministry, so that we can make this gift of connection happen for our church family.

- Dian Kingsbury, *Ties That Bind* Coordinator, (860) 745-7851  
(Be sure to talk into the machine so we will know you're not a telemarketer!)

## **Announcements:**



***Want to have your prayer life with Second Baptist on the go?*** We're now on the *Echo Prayer* app! We have both a feed and a group, where we can post prayers and prayer requests, and access them from our smart phones. Thank you to Molly Drenzek for sharing this tip this week!



***Have you moved? Changed phones or emails?*** If so, please reach out to Alison at [office@secondbaptistsuffield.org](mailto:office@secondbaptistsuffield.org) to update your information in CCB. It's our primary way of reaching you to keep you up to date and informed of events.



Please fill out and return your *Search Committee Surveys!* This information will help create a profile for the church, which is necessary using the national search platform, *MinistrElife*.



*Who might be interested in a Thursday, 10:00 AM Prayer Meeting* as a regular offering in our now-refreshed prayer garden? So far, I haven't heard from anyone, and I'd like to get a head count on this before placing it on our calendar. This would be similar to Pastor Tom's previous Prayer Meetings that were held on 10:00 AM Wednesdays. Because my secular position really requires my Wednesdays, Thursday is more workable for me. Please reach out if you'd be available and would like to join me then. We'd need at least 4 committed to make this stick.

### **COVID-19 Vaccine Questions**



Do you have COVID-19 vaccine questions? Do you need help navigating how to get a vaccine in Connecticut? Questions about the types available? Well, our own **Kathy Sylvia** has volunteered to help you out! **Please feel free to call her at 860-849-2222.**

## **Prayer Requests**



- Peggy Robards is recovering from heart surgery. She appreciates your prayers and outreach in this time.
- Gloria Magliozzi requests prayers for her brother, John, who is in St. Mary's in Waterbury for many tests.
- Please continue to pray for all those in need of healing in our church and community: Tony, a 19 year old from the First Church family; Ed Napolski, of the West Suffield Congregational Church; the Davis' extended family members, Brian, and Holly; and others that may be in our midst that have not reached my email or phone this week.
- Prayers of thanksgiving this week for those who are recovering from their illnesses.
- Please continue pray for the people of Myanmar/Burma, as the endure political upheaval and violence, once again.
- For all of humanity, as we seek to live in understanding, health, and peace, as we work for God's Realm to be a reality on Earth.

## **Birthdays and Anniversaries!**



### **Birthdays**

- 5 Robyn Smith Jennings
- 6 Chris Sikes  
Ray Schneller
- 7 Brenda Seger  
Lena Blake
- 8 Rose Marie Hubbard
- 9 Ed Prajzner, Sr.
- 11 Melissa Malec
- 12 Tina Berrien
- 16 Alec Remington Pryce  
Matthew Hubbard
- 18 Jim Craig  
Noah Prajzner
- 20 Nancy Fuller  
Jane Fuller
- 23 Stephanie d'Otreppe
- 24 Corey Haynes  
Linda Isham
- 25 Cristina Das Alsum

- 28 Dick Begin  
29 Amanda Sikes Moore  
Wally Malec  
Dan Aldrich  
31 Linda Gilbert  
John Killam  
Joshua Quinn

### Anniversaries

- 4 Jimmy & Emily Grant  
15 Diana & Joel Parker  
16 Elissa (Wood) & Joe Nasiatka  
30 Stephanie D'Otreppe & Don Kim

### Poem for Today

Today's poem is *May Day*, by Sara Teasdale. I hope you feel the beauty of creation in the rain as you read it this day.

A delicate fabric of bird song  
Floats in the air,  
The smell of wet wild earth  
Is everywhere.

Red small leaves of the maple  
Are clenched like a hand,  
Like girls at their first communion  
The pear trees stand.

Oh I must pass nothing by  
Without loving it much,  
The raindrop try with my lips,  
The grass with my touch;

For how can I be sure  
I shall see again  
The world on the first of May  
Shining after the rain?

Holding you in prayers of HOPE through God's promise of NEW LIFE this and every week!

Peace,  
Pastor Rachael  
SBC Office Hours (from home):  
9-5 (Tuesday and Thursday)  
and as needed for emergencies or by  
appointment.  
413-221-1582 (Cell, available until 8 PM every  
evening)