

Surprise Church

 Imagine a church that leaves the building...

October 16, 2020

Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

Yesterday, Governor Doug Burgum moved Burleigh County to the “Orange” threat level after a continual rise in COVID-19 numbers, which limits gatherings to 50, mask-wearing people. Today, as our CORE leadership team met to evaluate our recent survey results and discuss our plans, we opted for a **3-week pause on in-person worship**. Between now and our **tentative restart date of Sunday, November 8**, we will be working in the following 5 priorities:

- 1) **Fully relying upon *Community Groups***. Community Groups will continue meeting in person or virtually, while volunteer teams will now offer a weekly time for team members to discuss my sermons and pray for one another. If you are not yet in a Community Group, please text the word GROUPS to 701-380-8210, or visit SurpriseChurch.com/Groups to learn more. Not sure which group to join? Jump into our Surprise 101 virtual group, which meets on Thursday nights to discuss the Surprise vision and values!
- 2) **Providing high-quality worship videos each week**. Starting Saturday mornings, you’ll be able to watch our weekly worship videos at SurpriseChurch.com/WorshipAnywhere or on our Surprise Church Bismarck YouTube Account. On Sundays, you can watch them out 11 AM on our Facebook page or on CW Television.
- 3) **Evaluating all Safety Procedures**. When we do resume worship on Nov. 8 (tentatively), we will make sure that all of our policies are up to date and effective in a manner that reflects the latest recommendations. Any updated procedures will be posted at SurpriseChurch.com/Covid-19.
- 4) **Mobilizing for our Generosity Party**. Instead of postponing our annual celebration of generosity, we see this as the perfect time to uphold this value. Our Sunday messages and resources will be equipping you to set a *prayer-based budget*, which prioritizes giving and saving ahead of mere spending. The celebration culminates on November 15, when we hope to receive all “estimate of giving cards” from our community. Visit SurpriseChurch.com/GenerosityParty to learn more.
- 5) **Improving our teams and systems**. Our CORE Leadership team will have its annual retreat to lay our Surprise’s 2021 Master Plan, while our individual ministry teams will use the next three weeks to work on equipment, volunteer, or procedural improvements. We will be transitioning to a new Church Management Database and crafting a new plan for reaching people online. Finally, our task force is writing a long-term Constitution that will empower our first ever “Board of Elders” at Surprise, which is extremely exciting.

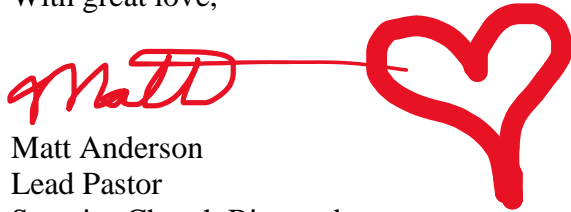
COVID has become quite personal for me. Today, I just received a word from Sanford Health that I tested positive for COVID-19, and so my family will be quarantining for some time. While

my symptoms are not as severe as many who have faced this illness, I feel a growing sense of empathy for those who live in fear of this disease.

After I heard from Sanford, how fitting that my Community Group reached out to offer their thoughts and prayers and then to line up meals and run errands for our family over the next week. This brought tears to my eyes, and my family is deeply grateful. It reminds me that Jesus' followers can shine most brightly at times like this. And it's a reminder for all of us to not miss out on the importance of Community Groups, as they truly become the hands and feet of Christ when one of their members have need.

It is an honor and a privilege to "leave the building" with you for Jesus sake.

With great love,

The signature "Matt" is written in a cursive, red ink style. A horizontal line extends from the end of the signature to the left side of a red heart symbol. The heart is drawn with thick, red, hand-drawn lines.

Matt Anderson
Lead Pastor
Surprise Church Bismarck