

Dear GCCC,

What a way to start 2022. We are truly living in a unique time in history. We've had to deal with so many changes in our work, our homes, our social lives, our neighborhoods and cities, and our church. Now in the midst of this omicron surge, we are dealing with even more illness and uncertainty. However, the Bible reminds us that our life in Christ happens firmly within the difficulties and uncertainties of life in this world. Christ is with us in our worst times and invites us to embrace our oneness with him. Let's continue to lean into this life together and be a genuine community of Christ for our neighbors in this city.

One question we've had to wrestle with a lot over the last two years is whether it's best to lean into that life together by gathering physically in-person. This past week, the elders and other leaders wrestled with it again, considering the current surge in the DMV. After thoughtful discussion about current area numbers, our volunteers and their ability to serve on Sundays, and the impact of our meeting for our larger community, we've decided to continue our in-person services at both locations.

We recognize, too, that it's a fluid situation. So we'll need to be flexible and, for those able to come out in-person on Sundays, willing to help when volunteer schedules may be basically void on any given Sunday.

For those of us joining on Sundays online-only, let's commit ourselves to doing things that will help us experience community and God's presence together online. Let's commit ourselves to joining at 11am, rather than watching later. Let's commit ourselves to connecting with other people joining the service—by being with others physically during the service, by chatting in the YouTube chat, by having a watch party, or by texting! One of the hardest things about worshiping online is feeling you're not really connected to other people. Small things like chatting and texting and joining at 11am can go a long way.

Let's keep living out our life in Christ. Like Hebrews 10 says, let's continue meeting together (in-person or online), spurring each other on to love and good works, and all the more as we see the Day of Christ approaching. Let's press on toward this calling even in midst of all the uncertainties due to the pandemic.

Starting this Sunday, our sermons will be considering the Book of Ecclesiastes. Join us as we celebrate Christ's humanity and oneness with us. Join us as we reflect on finding meaning in a world full of *hebel*--a Hebrew word that can mean vanity, absurdity, and fleetingness. Invite others to join us, too. Whether it's in-person or online, see you soon.

with love,
GCCC Leadership