



CHURCH, *in the* HOME

They devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and prayer.
- Acts 2:42

WORSHIP

Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Ephesians 5:18-20

Possible Expressions

- Songs & Hymns: Readings & songs, with or without instruments
- Thanksgiving: grow in expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving to the Lord.
- Creative Expression: worship through movement, writing, or drawing
- Listening to Holy Spirit: times of intentional silence to wait for Holy Spirit to speak, inspire, and lead us to the Father.

WORD

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.
Colossians 3:16

Possible Expressions

- Biblical Meditation: Spend time to allow for revelation from the word and the Spirit.
- Testimony of the Lord: Share personal application from time with the Lord and His word during the previous week.
- Encourage One Another: Exhortation to others from meditation and study of the word.
- Teaching of the Word: Prepared teaching on a specific topic or scripture.

FELLOWSHIP

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Possible Expressions

- Communion: Taking of the Lord's Supper.
- Prayer: Engaging in intercession for one another, the church, nation and world.
- Confession: Sharing burdens. - James 5:16
- Fellowship: meals, bearing one another's sorrows and joys, showing hospitality from house to house.
- Mission: seeking the Lord for ways to share the gospel and love our neighbors.
(TAG & Care Co. Projects)

**Resources for biblical meditation and prayer available at
<http://asknetwork.net/teachingresources/biblicalmeditation.php>

ALL CHURCH CONNECTION

1. **Common Word:** We encourage all homes to engage in 1 Peter. This will provide a common connection in conversation and input from elders and ministry leaders. The pastoral letter will provide some resources and encouragement for the word we are engaging each week.
2. **Tuesday Prayer Nights/Pursuing Unity Prayer Nights:** Meet with others in our body for prayer covering our church and nation in this critical hour, every Tuesday on Zoom. We will also join with Good Hope Church occasionally for our pursuit of relationship and unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ.
3. **Online Services:** We will have designated Sundays, July 26 and August 30, for gatherings online for worship and word, as we have been doing the past few months. This will allow for a shared experience together before the Lord.
4. **Healing Prayer/Worship Nights:** Size appropriate, in-person gatherings for healing prayer and worship will be offered at various times over the summer when allowed.
5. **COSC Chat:** Our redesigned app will contain a password protected chat section for congregation members to communicate regularly with one another for encouragement.

NEXT GENERATION

We have long desired and worked towards discipleship from generation to generation. While age-specific teaching will always be a valuable part of learning, we long for this season to give greater space for integration, participation and discipleship from one generation to another.

It is acknowledged that each gathering will have any variant of ages and needs, and thus may require some personalized and crafted ideas for each group.

We hope that teens participate in most, if not all, adult portions of church. It is unto their discipleship, and ability to mature around other believers of various life stages. Giving purposeful space for their contributions, calling forth their gifts (musical, writing, intellect) and engaging their questions. Our teens will still be meeting with their age-specific homegroup regularly for more personalized activities and bible study.

Children learn by mirroring. We have all been touched by our congregational babies raising their hands in worship as they watch those around them. We long to have this space offer a more intimate setting to train by watching and participating. We also anticipate that some groups may also have purposeful space for age appropriate worship and learning.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the difference between home group and church in the home?

A home group is mainly for fellowship, for mutual encouragement and connection through prayer and conversation around the Word. Church in the home is on a Sunday (in most cases) and, for COSC in July and August, takes the place of a Sunday church service. Therefore, it includes three basic elements of a traditional Christian church--Worship, Word, and Fellowship.

Are home group leaders automatically "church in the home" leaders?

No. Home group leaders did not sign up to lead a church. Some HG leaders may not have the capacity or desire to lead a church in the home this summer. However, any HG leaders who wish to lead a church in the home will be supported and encouraged in that process. We anticipate some shifting of members among current home groups, but because nearly everyone is already in a home group, it is an easy starting point.

Does this use of church in the home mean that COSC is planning to move to more of a house church model than a large gathering on Sunday model?

No! We do not believe that God is leading COSC to eliminate large-group gatherings in the long term, and we are so eager to be back together! However, we believe that God is going to use this season to build things into us as a congregation that will be useful and applicable as we move into a new season of church life, taking up God's calling on us in our city.

Why are we not just continuing with the Sunday livestream service like we have been doing?

God has fashioned the church so that His people, all His people, are equipped with spiritual gifts to be the church. He is the most present when all are bringing expressions of the Holy Spirit that is in them to the gathering unto the Lord. There is a danger of large gatherings contributing to a consumer mindset towards church. We come to a worship service for what we get and the vast majority play little to no role in contributing to the worship service. A virtual gathering like we have been doing for the last several months is even more prone to a consumer experience of Church. So we would like to take the summer months of July and August to implement Sunday gatherings in homes, gatherings that call on more people to be involved in producing the worship service, allowing the Holy Spirit to flow in and through them for a fresh experience of the Lord's presence.

How can we maintain a sense of corporate identity with the entire body of COSC?

There will be several ways that this can and will happen. We plan to hold entire church livestream services (like we have been doing) on July 26 and August 30. We will continue the corporate prayer meetings on Tuesday evenings via Zoom call. We are developing a new app with a chat feature to promote church wide connection and communication. We will be exploring ways that various ministries can hold gatherings in the sanctuary that meet the guidelines for permissible gathering. Wherever possible, we will try to have an option for connecting to these events online.

What are we going to do with our kids at a church in the home?

Kids have been part of the church for its entire existence, and in the vast majority of churches, have not had a separate Sunday school teaching time. Children learn most things by watching their parents, and Christian practice is no different. That sounds great in theory, but what about in reality? There are many creative (and fun) ways to incorporate children into a church in the home. We will have resources available for parents to use this summer. Children's ministry will also be reaching out to each church in the home to offer support and suggestions.

What if I am not comfortable or able to meet in person this summer?

We anticipate that this will be true for a significant number of people. There will be virtual options, either through groups that are 100% virtual, or by connecting virtually to a group that is meeting in person.

What happens after August?

We do not know. We do not know how the COVID virus will continue to impact our ability to gather in the Fall. But we do anticipate that these two months of Church in the Home will be an equipping of the Lord for what we will be facing and what He is calling us to, which only He knows right now.

***The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.***

- 2 Corinthians 13:14

