

Email December 15, 2020

Greetings all,

When we shut down the church to in person gatherings a few weeks ago, we had set today as the date to evaluate the possibility of reopening. Our Reopening Leadership Team met again (8 of us met via zoom) to consider when we might reopen for in person activities and meetings.

After much discussion, we decided 1) that it is unwise to open at this time, and 2) we set some criteria for when we might reopen.

First we decided not to reopen immediately. Currently, Douglas County's rate of increase in active cases has slowed from a drastic peak about a week ago, but the numbers are still quite high. We had an increase of 141 active cases this week, and our COVID-19 positive testing rate is 28.1% which is high. Our weekly per capita infection rate is 69.8 per 100,000. That doesn't seem like much but is actually very high. If that rate persisted for one year, every resident in Douglas County would have contracted COVID-19. We used the following websites for data:
<https://gethealthycarsoncity.org/covid-19-douglas-county/>
https://covidactnow.org/us/nv/county/douglas_county/?s=1441405
<https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov/>

Second, our team decided that we will consider reopening only when the number of active cases for Douglas County reaches a level we experienced prior to the Thanksgiving surge. To that end, we set 30 active cases as the number when our Reopening Leadership Team will meet again. Other data will be considered as well (testing positivity rate, per capita infection rate, local and state guidelines, etc.). Our goal is not to reopen until it is safe for our congregation, and not until we can expect to remain open.

If you are like me, you have set much of your hope for the future on a vaccine. Well, it is finally going to be available in the not-so-distant future. I figure we'd better take it, or quit complaining about COVID-19.

I know we want to meet together again. It would be disappointing if we didn't feel that way. But I also sense that God has really been working among us--even while we have been isolated. There is truly a Spirit of being connected while absent. That sort of thing can only come from God.

Hang in there! With a vaccine available to more and more people, and with reduced travel after New Year's Day, I hope that we will be meeting again by the end of January.

Blessings, --pastor tony