



320 East Fourth Street, PO Box 130
Arthur, Iowa 51431-0130
office@arthurefc.org arthurefc.org
712-367-2472

*Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!
Serve the LORD with gladness!
Come into his presence with singing!
Know that the LORD, he is God!
It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name!
For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.*
- Psalm 100:1-5, ESV

Greetings Arthur E-Free Church Family

This Sunday I'm planning on taking a one week break from our current sermon series – *Philippians – Finding and Sustaining REAL Joy...* and turning to the glorious words of Psalm 100. The theme of 'joy' that we've seen over and over in Philippians is here in Psalm 100 as well! Actually, the plan (this Sunday) is to quickly reflect on a couple of shorter Psalms (100 and 150) as we celebrate our first-step in coming back together as a church family.

That said – I have a number of things and some details about our planned outdoor service this Sunday (May 10) to share with all of you. And just in case all the unusual events of the last couple of months has left your 'head spinning' – this is a friendly reminder that this Sunday is Mother's Day so be sure to appreciate your mom in a special way in the midst of these unique circumstances. Sorry about all the detail – the attempt is to communicate our 'If the Lord wills...' plans as clearly as possible. And hopefully through the process we'll all know what to expect and have most of our questions answered.

Anyway, we have an outdoor worship service planned beginning at 11 AM (obviously that is weather dependent, sound systems and rain don't mix well). Please note the time is 11 AM – we decided to meet a little later than usual to allow as much time as possible for it to warm up. The weather forecast suggests that Sunday might be a little on the chilly side but we're not getting the snow I saw on the 'weather map' in parts of the New England and we're thankful for that. The plan is to meet in the grassy lot behind the church building (just across Fourth Street) and in our North parking lot (the back of the church building). The reason for choosing to meet outdoors is that we can worship together (something that is long-overdue) while at the same time keeping the environment as safe as possible and maintaining the 'social distancing' that is still required by the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Experts tell us that 'social distancing' in an outside environment with fresh air and the UV from sunlight will significantly limit the risk of virus transmission. If you are curious please check out the official 'Guidance for Spiritual and Religious Gatherings During COVID-19' from the Iowa Department of Public Health – <https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/61/covid19/Guidance%20->

[%20Religious%20Facilities%20and%20Places%20of%20Worship.pdf](#). One thing you'll notice right away is that outdoor and drive up worship services are a recommended option. That said – if you are uncomfortable coming for any reason we're planning to continue our online option – posting the messages on Facebook and YouTube as we have been over the past weeks. We are asking everyone to make your own informed decisions and if you are in one of the higher risk categories I (Pastor Dave, speaking) would encourage you to please heed the advice of medical professionals and of course if you are sick please stay home. We've all heard these messages many, many times over the past several weeks but I just want to remind us of them – they are important. We really do what to re-open and we want to do it as safely as possible. In summery we want to communicate the message – come if you're comfortable and if you're not yet comfortable that's okay, don't feel any pressure.

Here are some specifics:

1. The service is scheduled for 11 AM and we are working hard to keep this worship service short (roughly 45-50 minutes). If you would please enter the church parking lot from State Highway 175 and drive then drive around the building for parking. We'll have a few people helping to direct traffic, please reserve the closest parking spaces for those who would like to remain in their cars throughout the service.
2. We want to continue to keep the building closed. So we kindly ask everyone to please plan to use the restroom before you come. Please understand that that there are multiple reasons for this – obviously everyone's safety is top priority and also there are currently very specific requirements for sanitizing publicly used spaces and if we all stay outside this relaxes an extensive sanitizing workload.
3. Some have wondered about the options for receiving an offering. We will have a container that you are welcome to drop your offerings in on Sunday and our online giving option is also live and available. You can go to our church website and click the link or go directly to – <https://give.idonate.com/arthur-evangelical-free-church/give>.
4. Those who would like to drive up and remain in their cars are welcome to do so and you (assuming everything works as planned) will have the capability of listening to the music and message over your cars radio via a short-range AM radio transmitter (tune to AM 1650).
5. Those who would like to sit outside are welcome and encouraged to do so – please bring your own chairs or blankets (this way we are not required to sanitize the seating) and remember that Sunday's forecast puts the temperature in the 50's – so plan accordingly.
6. Please understand that (and I know this is hard) we must insist that we sit only with those who live at your address that that we all maintain social distancing (easier to do outside) and that's a minimum of 6 feet of separation between you and those who are not members of your household and obviously no hand-shaking etc.
7. At this point the restrictions have only been lifted for 'religious gatherings' and other social gatherings remain limited to groups of 10 or less so we need to ask that out of respect for these regulations that we leave promptly after the service and don't allow our worship service to turn into a long overdue fellowship / friendship gathering. We all long for that day and it will come – it's just not here yet.
8. Thanks for being flexible! We're in this together and I know that many, many of you are as excited as I (Pastor Dave) am to see many of your faces again.

In conclusion the words of Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV) come to mind – *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.* Our gathering together is going to look a little different for a while but it sure will be good to be together.

Joyfully!
Pastor Dave

Praise the LORD!
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens!
Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his excellent greatness!
Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
Praise him with sounding cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
Let everything that has breath praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD!
-Psalm 150:1-6, ESV