DRBC Family,

The elders pray you are all well in the Lord and resting in His grace today. We are writing with some important updates related to COVID-19 policies at DRBC.

As you may have seen, the CDC recently released updated guidance lifting certain restrictions for fully vaccinated individuals, and Governor Northam, in turn, has amended his executive order to implement these new guidelines. More generally, the COVID-19 landscape is changing rapidly, with restrictions being eased, new guidance being issued, and case numbers decreasing.

In light of these and other developments, we are writing to inform you that, effective immediately, DRBC is lifting its COVID-19 policies. Additionally, we will be phasing out our Sunday morning livestream over the coming weeks. Both decisions are explained in more detail below.

Lifting DRBC’s COVID-19 Policies. The elders’ decision to lift DRBC’s COVID-19 policies is just that—a decision not to continue imposing DRBC-specific COVID-19 requirements. This decision should not be misunderstood as staking out a position that “anything goes” at DRBC going forward, or as taking sides on whether members should wear masks or engage in social distancing. Instead, we expect members of the congregation to consult Scripture and relevant governmental pronouncements; to be “subject to the governing authorities” in accordance with law (Rom. 13:1); and to prayerfully act in a Christ-honoring manner consistent with their consciences and with the admonition to “in humility count others more significant than yourselves” (Phil. 2:3).

In deciding whether to wear a mask, to social distance, or to attend a service indoors when sick, for example, we ought to consult relevant guidance and act with clear consciences before the Lord, while simultaneously ensuring that we “walk in love” toward other members, “as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us,” and that we “submi[t] to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph. 5:2, 21). We as members may not always agree on what conduct is necessary, permissible, or wise in light of biblical, medical, prudential, legal, moral, political, personal, scientific, and professional considerations, but we can and should always strive for unity and love toward one another.

We also want to clarify a few additional points:

- DRBC will not ask people in attendance on Sunday mornings whether they have been vaccinated for purposes of enforcing any federal, state, or local policy.
- At this time, the elders do not expect to adopt further churchwide COVID-19 policies, though we will continue monitoring circumstances and take action if needed.
- Members of the congregation who desire to engage in social distancing are welcome to use the pews that are marked with tape in the Main Hall (currently, the rows closest to the parking lot and in the middle), as well as the Fellowship Hall through the summer. Members who are not distancing should give first priority to members who are distancing in those rows. The markings will eventually be adjusted and removed to ensure adequate space for all to gather.
- The CDC has published guidance about when to quarantine or isolate to avoid transmitting COVID-19 to others; we expect that members of the congregation will continue to refer to that guidance when deciding whether to attend services at DRBC.

Phasing Out The Livestream. The elders are grateful for the blessings of technology and for the way that livestreaming our Sunday morning service has enabled many people to feed on God’s Word during the unique circumstances of a worldwide pandemic. At the same time, we are mindful that Scripture
commands believers to assemble regularly (e.g., Heb. 10:25), as both our Statement of Faith and Church Covenant affirm.

Given the significant national and local progress in the battle against COVID-19, we have decided to limit access to our livestream to two categories of people: (1) members who are homebound, and (2) members who are sick or hospitalized (or who are caring for sick or hospitalized children) and therefore unable to attend. If for one of these reasons you need to request the link, please visit the DRBC website HERE. Once the form is submitted, you will receive the link.

If you are unable to gather with us for a different reason, we encourage you to spend some time in prayer and the Word in the morning and watch DRBC’s sermon when it is posted this afternoon.

If you are traveling, we encourage you to attend a local church wherever you find yourself. This could be an edifying opportunity, made possible by the providence of God, for you to interact with other saints in Christ’s church.

We plan to continue livestreaming the service into the Fellowship Hall through the end of the summer; this area can be used as an “overflow” room for parents with crying children and for people who would like to spread out more. The outdoor listening area will be discontinued by July 2021.

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The elders are aware that for some members, this announcement may seem exciting and long overdue—but for others, the announcement may seem surprising or even rash, and it could produce feelings of concern, anxiety, anger, or fear. Either way, we would encourage you to go to Christ in prayer, to trust that the Lord will “supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19), and to ask Him to help you be “in full accord and of one mind” with other brothers and sisters (Phil. 2:2).

We also encourage you to show patience, charity, and gentleness with one another. A few months ago, we encouraged you to show charity and reserve judgment on those who were not wearing masks during our gathering. As things are shifting, we now have the opportunity to adopt the same posture toward people who will still be wearing masks or practicing social distancing.

As we aim to love one another in this uniquely challenging season, we would be well served to remember Paul’s words to the Roman church:

“None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. 8 For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. 10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; 11 for it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.” Romans 14:7–12

May we live and love one another in light of that Great Day that is fast approaching.
If you have further questions about what this announcement might mean for you or would like to process it with someone else, please feel free to reach out to an elder or to another member. This is a good opportunity for us to encourage, sharpen, and serve one another.

We love you and are grateful for each of you. May the Lord continue to give us grace as we seek to follow Him and proclaim the Gospel faithfully.

In Grace,

Garrett (on behalf of the elders)