

St. John's Lutheran Church and Preschool

The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod

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May 30, 2020

Dear Fellow Members of St. Johns,

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God the Father, and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Most of us were very excited when we heard President Trump announce that he is deeming church services to be **essential** in our land. Amen! His announcement makes it possible for us to hold in-person worship service once again under strict social distancing guidelines. Hopefully these last weeks and months have taught us the value of being together in the Lord's House for the forgiveness, comfort and reassurance it brings into our lives.

As we gather, things will not return automatically to "normal." As a congregation we need to rethink many of our practices in order to reassure our members they will be safe as they worship at St. John's. Here are just a few examples:

* At first, we will be worshipping in person **every other week beginning this Sunday, May 31**. This allows for a natural 14 day quarantine period between Sunday services. It also gives us opportunity to stream online services for the in between Sundays in order to provide worship for those who can't, or shouldn't gather in groups at this time. **We will be offering Holy Communion** at all in-person services regardless of the week of the month.

* Worship will be conducted at **9 a.m.**, which is our normal summer schedule.

* We will **all need to wear face masks and use hand sanitizer** when we enter the building. We do this not for ourselves only, but for the care and protection of others. Of course we will provide the hand sanitizer, but members are asked to bring their own face masks to services. If you forget yours, or don't have one, a mask will be provided for you.

* There will be the **option to have your temperature taken** by a non-contact thermometer as you enter the building.

* Only every other pew will be available for seating. Please sit at least 6 feet from those worshipping around you. Families, of the same household, or those who have had continuous contact in these months may sit together

* All items, including hymnals, attendance pads and the like will be removed from the pews.

- * There will be many **changes to the way we receive Holy Communion**. Continuous line, socially distanced distribution, will be the norm. More changes will be explained during worship.
- * Next, for the time being, we will not be holding in person Sunday School, Bible Classes or fellowship events. All our meetings must be socially distanced.

It is our fond desire to return to a more normal posture in the fall.

Many members may feel that these steps, and more like them, are taking things too far. As believers in a loving and compassionate God we don't want to "live in fear" of the virus. Yet, in these times, we want to be a part of the solution, not the problem. Unlike some other ministers whom you may be hearing about on the news, I don't feel like the "government is trying to control us." Instead, let's see this as an opportunity for us as Christians to be contributing adults to society. Wearing a mask and taking social distancing steps doesn't make us weak, scared, dumb or even "controlled." We can view it as making us loving and considerate toward others as our Savior has asked us to do. Even if you disagree with these distancing measures, please be respectful of the needs of others.

Many thanks to our worship team who have served over these last months. The team includes Natalie Smith, Janine Bock, and Darlene our organist. Karen Boetefuer has also assisted. This team plans to continue to record services on the Sundays when we are not meeting in person.

For those who don't feel comfortable attending worship at this time, we want to encourage you to stay home until you feel it is time to venture out. Please continue to utilize the online services being offered for you.

For those who do not have internet please be aware of these worship options:

- * The Lutheran Hour - Sundays - WSAM - The Bay - 1400 am radio at 8:30 a.m.
- * Radio Broadcast - Immanuel Lutheran Bay City - WSAM - 1400 am radio at 9:00 a.m.
- * Worship Anew - WAQP Broadcast Channel 49 - Sundays at 11:30 a.m.
- * Worship Anew - Direct TV - Channel 377 - Sundays at 11:30 a.m.
- * Worship Anew - Dish TV - Channel 49 - Sundays at 11:30 a.m.

As always, please know that you are in our prayers. I am here in the Church Office regularly, and have resources to help, if you are in need.

God's Richest Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Jung". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter 'P' being large and prominent.

Pastor Jung