

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Update

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." ~John 14:27~

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The last few months have been a melting pot of emotions. There has been fear and anxiety centered around a virus about which there was little known information. There has been frustration centered on the restrictions that many felt were too much while many felt they were too little. In the midst of all of it, there has also been thankfulness. Thankfulness that we could still gather for God's blessings even if it was in a decreased capacity. There was joy found at services online or in parking lots. We have returned to rejoicing in the little things. The devil has not been able to destroy the body of Christ... nor will he ever. I have been waiting patiently to be able to send this letter to you. It is with joy that I can announce that Bethlehem will be returning to our normal worship schedule on the weekend of May 30/31. There are going to be some recommendations and restrictions for our services out of love and concern for our neighbors, and the witness we give to our community. Out of concern for the potential explosiveness of the virus, we are going to be taking measures to keep people safe according to national, state, and county recommendations, while allowing us to reasonably gather around God's Word and Sacraments. The Divine Service schedule along with service information and instructions is as follows:

- Schedule: **Saturdays at 5:30 pm; Sundays at 8 am & 10:30 am; Wednesdays at 6 pm.**
- You do not need to register for services anymore, however, seating will be in every other pew (where to sit will be clearly marked). People within a household may sit next to each other, but if there are multiple households in one pew, they will need to be properly socially distanced. We will also be utilizing the Century Room and the gymnasium for any overflow that is necessary to maintain social distancing.
- Offering plates will be located in the back of the sanctuary and will not be passed during service.
- The entire Divine Service will be printed in the bulletin, it will also be available electronically on the website for those that wish to use their phones or devices. If you take a bulletin, please take your bulletin with you after the service. All hymnals and Records of Fellowship will be removed from the pews.
- Please use hand sanitizer as you enter. There are multiple stations available in the sanctuary and Century Room. A team of ushers will also sanitize the pews and sanctuary after each service.
- Masks are not mandatory, however, people should feel free to wear them. We are also working on providing masks that will be available to take with you if you so desire.
- The Lord's Supper will be distributed in a continuous way one side at a time, **keeping proper social distancing**, with people coming up the center aisle and returning via the side aisle. The pastors will be washing and sanitizing before distribution, and wearing masks and gloves during distribution.
- We will still be live-streaming our 8 am service for those who are not yet comfortable gathering. If you are sick or in a high risk category, please take advantage of this option.

These restrictions and recommendations are an attempt to provide love and concern for our neighbor while taking comfort in the blessings of God, and the gathering of the body of Christ.

May God's peace and blessing rest upon you at this time.

In Christ,

The Board of Elders

Pastor Niles

Pastor Kubow