

May 29, 2020

Members of St. John's,



It has been more than two months since our congregation made the difficult decision to transition from in-person and on-site worship to solely providing worship services online. At St. John's Lutheran Church we much enjoy on Sunday physically meeting together for the purpose of receiving God's gifts, offer Him our thanksgiving and praise, encouraging each other, and to engage in acts and works of mercy for others. It seems, for the time being, the days of our being separated from one another have begun to end. Beginning **Sunday, June 7, 2020** St. John's will begin the transition back to onsite worship at St. John's.

On-site worship services were suspended out of a genuine desire to love and serve our neighbor by protecting their health and safety. This same genuine desire to love and serve the members of St. John's continues as we now begin the phases of reopening on-site Sunday morning worship. However, Sunday morning worship at St. John's will not return immediately "back to normal." Following the guidance and recommendations of the CDC, the Minnesota Department of Health, our local health officials and the Minnesota North District LCMS leadership, we kindly ask that all who come to on-site worship at St. John's follow the "Protocol for Resuming On-Site Worship" (enclosed) adopted by the Board of Elders until further notice. This is for your safety and the other members safety. St. John's Lutheran Church has and will continue to operate by the Executive Orders given by Governor Walz and love and care for the health and wellbeing of the members. Our on-site worship will abide by the occupancy standard laid out in Governor Walz's Executive Order 20-63 which allows for 25% of capacity along with the recommended social distancing of 6 feet. The Board of Elders have set an attendance cap of 30 people. Before planning to join us for worship we kindly ask everyone to be aware of the following:

- **An Elder** will greet you at the **north parking lot door**. You will be invited to use hand sanitizer, and reminded to wear your mask if you have one. You will be directed to the sanctuary to a specified seat in the sanctuary to aid in social distancing while maximizing our seating capacity. At this time the balcony will be closed for the protection of our organists.
- **Attendance:** Attendance is limited to 25% of capacity per the Minnesota Department of Health's guidelines. The Board of Elders have put an attendance cap of 30 people for Sunday morning worship. Members and visitors will RSVP attendance by either visiting the church's website at www.stjohnsperham.com or calling Pr. Nies at 605-830-0919. To ensure that all members have the opportunity to worship on-site on Sunday, please limit your attending to every 2 or 3 services. Information regarding the capacity for Sunday service will be made available on the church's Facebook page. Once the capacity has been met, RSVP's will no longer be accepted. Small group gatherings of 10 or less will continue on Sunday evening at 7 & 7:30 pm and Wednesday afternoon, 1:00 - 1:30 - 2:00 pm. Sunday services are planned to continue to be streamed on the church's Facebook page, Website, and Channel 14. If you have difficulty signing up for these worship opportunities online, please call Pr. Nies for assistance at 605-830-0919.
- **Communion** will be offered at each service. The aim of the Board of Elders is to conduct distribution of the Lord's Supper in a way that considers all of the suggested health practices and also is reverent. Extra sanitary protocols will be followed. The Pastor and Elders will come to each pew and distribute the Lord's body and blood in order to alleviate unnecessary movement during the service.
- **Singing** is an important part of our worship and congregational life. However, some studies show singing may present a greater potential for transmitting COVID-19. In order to bridge the gap, the Board of Elders have decided to have congregational singing but set a limit of two hymns and a maximum of three stanzas.
- **All other events** are limited to 10 people and must be scheduled through the pastor.
- **Due to the ever-changing** nature of this health crisis, the Board of Elders may need to reassess the ability to effectively follow these protocols and may need to reevaluate on-site worship. We thank you for your patience during this time.

In Jesus, The Board of Elders & Pastor Nies