

Returning to Worship
at
Good Hope Lutheran Church

June, 2020

**I was glad when they said unto me, Come!
Let us go to the house of the Lord!
--Psalm 122.1**

It is both our duty and our delight to gather each week to worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have taken this for granted for so very long! Now, in these trying times, we are attempting to get back to worship, and we will—with patience, and flexibility, and the God given grace to seek what is best for each other, and not merely what is best for self.

Here are the guidelines for returning to worship approved by your council on May 21st, 2020. Council's intention is to review the plan weekly, making modifications where necessary.

1. Before you come to church.

Am I feeling well today? Are the kids feeling good? Do I have a medical condition that puts me especially at risk?

It's ok to stay home! God values your health more than your attendance record, and so do we! Worship services led by Pastor Steve and filmed at St John will be available on Facebook, so you can safely tune in at home.

2. On your way to church.

Have I remembered my mask?

Wearing a mask in the midst of an epidemic is a courtesy to those around you. We strongly suggest in the name of Jesus Himself that you get into this habit wherever you go in public, and certainly at church. See Galatians 5.13 – 14, among other Scriptures.

Have I remembered to bring hand sanitizer?

The church will endeavor to have hand sanitizer available, but bringing your own and using it often is a good idea. Keeping your hands clean and not touching your face are two keys to keeping yourself and your family healthy.

3. When is church, by the way?

Services will be held Saturday night at 5 p.m., and Sunday morning at 10 a.m.

Please notice that for the time being, we have suspended services, Sunday morning at 7:30! One of the biggest challenges we face is how to clean and disinfect the church after each service, and the one hour between the end of 7:30 worship and the beginning of 10 a.m. worship may simply not be enough time. Therefore, 7:30 a.m. services have been put on hold *for now*—this will be reevaluated, with the aim of rescheduling this service as soon as possible.

4. What to expect when you arrive

- a. **The doors will be propped open for you**—use the front doors or, if dropping family members off, the door at the back alley. See the attached traffic flow chart, as US 68 is under construction and this will be an on-going issue for us as well. And please do not arrive for worship more than 20 minutes in advance of the service, as we are trying to restrict access overall.
 - b. **There is no Sunday School, and no fellowship time at the kitchen.** Parts of the building will be blocked off, as we will not be using it and do not want to have to clean it each week. Bring your own water to drink, if needed, as the water fountains will also be off limits.
 - c. **There will be no bulletins. Hymnals will be removed from the pews.** Both services will be using the Power Point—again, at least for now. But we will be singing! And we will be praising God.
 - d. **Maintain social distancing!** No handshakes, hugs, or high fives, and this will be especially challenging as you enter and leave the sanctuary. We ask you to be vigilant. Social distancing also includes children and youth, of course; young people are encouraged to remain with their immediate families.
 - e. **Maintain social distancing still further,** by sitting in family groups at the ends of every other pew. This may take a while to get used to, and we aim to have help available, pointing you to appropriate seating. The balcony will be open for overflow, and possibly the Fellowship Hall as well.
 - f. **There will be no children's sermon.**
 - g. **There will be no passing of the offering plate.** The offering plate will be in the back, and offerings can be dropped off when you enter or when you leave.
 - h. **There will be no communion**—sadly, because this is fundamental to our Christian identity. We will be reviewing methods of sharing communion, looking for ways of celebrating the sacrament that are both reasonable and safe. Again, this is a temporary change.
 - i. **After worship,** social distancing remains important as you exit, so be vigilant. Also, there will be a need to clean and disinfect the building after each service, and it's a bit unfair to drop all this on our custodians, so there may be opportunity to volunteer a week here or there to help.
5. If a case of CO-VID 19 is diagnosed in a member of the congregation: We will be in contact with the county Health Department, and follow their guidelines and procedures.