



# St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and School (LCMS)

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Matthew V. Moss, Pastor  
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*"Learning and Living as God's Baptized Children"*

Dear St. John's community,

*Sunday, May 24, 2020*

*I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD!' – Psalm 122:1*

The time has come, dear saints of God, to resume gathering for Divine Services! Services will begin on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday **May 30 – June 1**. In order to gather safely and responsibly we will follow the protocols provided in this letter (a more detailed list will be printed off and available at church for any who desire). These protocols are based on current guidance issued by the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other public health authorities. Seven Roman Catholic bishops of the various Minnesota dioceses, as well as the leaders of five different Lutheran synods, including our own District President Lucas Woodford, presented church-specific protocols to Governor Walz who has now agreed to them and provided us with additional guidance and requirements (*updated as of Saturday, May 23, 12:00 P.M.*).

Our pastors, deacons, and custodial staff have reviewed the various requirements, recommendations, and protocols. We have adapted them to fit our particular facility and congregation. The decision by your pastors and deacons to reopen under these conditions was not a decision made lightly. It is to be treated with seriousness. We ask for your utmost cooperation with the protocols outlined below. ***Please read this letter carefully.***

## **Before Services:**

- We must ***strongly encourage*** those who are elderly, at risk, or have underlying medical conditions to refrain from attending for the time being.
- If you are ill, or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, or have come in contact with those who have, we insist you stay home until healthy and no longer self-quarantining.
- Initially we will limit the maximum attendance to 50 persons per service (*less than 1/7 of our capacity*)
- We will begin offering four services (*the number of services/persons may change according to need*)
  - Saturday at 5:00 P.M.
  - Sunday at 9:30 A.M. & 3:00 P.M.
  - Monday at 7:00 P.M. – the sanctuary being disinfected in-between each service
- Those who wish to attend must notify us via the website Sign-Up Genius, so that we can maintain predictable size of the gathering. Links will be sent out each week via email, St. John's website, and Facebook page.
- The Sunday morning service (9:30 A.M.) will continue to be Live-Streamed for those unable to attend.

## **Arriving for Services:**

- Only Entrance 1 will be unlocked and manned by the Safety Team.
- Hand sanitizers will be available between the entry and sanctuary.
- Certain hallways and bathrooms will be closed by the custodians to limit areas for cleaning.
- Please adhere to all other signage or instructions that are given as you enter and exit the building.

- You are encouraged to wear a mask as you enter, exit, or at any time when not social distancing.
- Since the Offering will not be collected during the services, please leave it in the plate upon entering.
- We will use full-printed bulletins instead of hymnals and pews will be marked off for distancing.

#### **During the Services:**

- Liturgy and Hymnody will be abridged.
- Pastors will thoroughly wash immediately prior to the Service of the Sacrament.
- Distribution of Holy Communion will be “walk-through” instead of at the rail.
- After each person the Chalice will be wiped with a purificator soaked in grain-alcohol (75.5% abv).
- Individual glass cups will be offered at one of the services each week, noted on the Sign-Up website, placing only a few cups per tray to eliminate the accidental touching of multiple cups.
- If you currently serve as an acolyte, usher, money counter, worship assistant, altar guild, or safety team member, you will receive additional communication shortly regarding how this affects your tasks.

#### **After the Services:**

- Please do not shake hands, hug, or touch people in greeting, and do your best to socially distance.
- Please do not congregate in the narthex and hallways, but proceed to the parking lot.

#### **Beyond the Divine Services:**

- Bible studies will be available on our website, YouTube, and Facebook.
- We will continue to Live-Stream a Wednesday evening prayer service.
- Weddings, Baptisms, and Funerals may be held during this phase, but must follow the same protocols listed here. Live-streaming can be made available to include those not able to attend.
- Continue to pray for one another, your congregation & school, and your pastors and teachers.
- Continue to pray for your governor, legislature, and community.
- Call one another, visit when and where it is allowed, and remember our homebound members.

Following these warnings and protocols our congregation may “*Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy*” (3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment) while also honoring our governing authorities’ recommendations (4<sup>th</sup> Commandment) and seeking to do no physical harm to our neighbors (5<sup>th</sup> Commandment). This will be more complicated than “Church as normal” and will require cooperation and initiative from members. However, these measures are reasonable. The added level of work and commitment are wholly within your calling as members of the body of Christ. These measures are inconvenient and not ideal, but we can endure them- and worse trials- as we swore in the vows we made at Confirmation. Understanding the risks of COVID-19 and the benefits of the Divine Service, let us gather together in praise of our God and to receive His sacramental gifts of life and salvation in the fellowship of this altar.

*Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling!  
Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God.*

Psalm 43:3-4

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Matthew V. Moss  
Pastor Matthew P. Johnson  
Council of Deacons