

June 12, 2020

Dear Bethlehem Members and Friends,

It's hard to believe that it's been almost 3 months since we worshipped together in our beautiful sanctuary!

The COVID-19 Pandemic is real and to keep all of you healthy and safe we continue to follow the guidelines of the Minnesota Department of Health, the ELCA and the NE Synod. In these many ways the stay-at-home order has not closed worship; we are openly and even more widely praising God in this time of worldwide crisis.

On March 22<sup>nd</sup> Bethlehem began to offer worship as an on-line option. Our website, [www.sharingchrist.org](http://www.sharingchrist.org) has been updated to include links to all services. You will find links to:

- Facebook, that is available to everyone (not just to Facebook members) – under “Happenings” tab
- Audio file – under “Worship” tab

We also have a complete worship bulletin, which includes all the words of worship and the sermon, available to those that do not use the internet. Call the church office at 387-2227 if you would like to receive a weekly copy. This is also posted on our website under “Happenings” tab, then chose “Current Postings.”

How does one prepare to worship in the sanctuary again? *Prayerfully and Carefully!*

Here is an update from the Smart Re-opening Committee:

- We are committed to going slowly so that we are not creating an environment that will increase the spread of the virus. We want all of you to continue to be well.
- We do not have a re-opening date set
- Video and audio worship are continuing
- We are in a planning stage. We are reviewing all of the guidelines that must be in-place before gathering for in-person worship

When it does happen, what will worship in-person look like? This is what we know today, but things change quickly.

- Using hand sanitizer, masks, 6-foot distancing; Music with no hymn singing, liturgy with no unison prayers; less paper-more visual screens, quieter sanctuary, contactless communion distribution, shorter services, etc.
- Our expectation is for 2 Sunday worship services
- On-line worship will continue with a delay in posting on-line
- All worship assistants will have training, i.e. Ushers, Greeters, Altar guild, Readers and others

How would you feel about an out-of-doors service? Would you prefer to attend in cars or on a lawn? These are a few service options being considered next. We will continue to update you as we go along.

We want your feedback! Please contact us with your thoughts and concerns.

In Christ,

BLC's Smart Re-Opening Team

Pastor Mark Ditmanson, Eric Anderson, Joni & Nathan Kristenson, Annie & Mike DeBevec, Jim Wiinanan, Roger Barton and Denise Murray

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