



May 2020

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The answer to our prayers is coming, a return to live worship. After consulting with the Board of Directors we have set the date for return to live worship as Sunday, May 31st. We understand that the corona virus is still in our community, yet using reasonable safety precautions, we believe we can come together for worship with limited risk.

Some people may not yet be comfortable gathering in a larger group, and we have utmost respect for your concerns. The service will continue to be live streamed on Facebook and available for viewing on our church's website the following week. Our prayer is that you only return to live worship when you are comfortable doing so.

For the health and safety of those who come to live worship, there will need to be temporary changes to how we gather, to maintain social distancing. These changes will be in place until further notice. The use of face masks is encouraged while in the building. When you arrive at the church, please come directly to the sanctuary without socializing in the Gathering Area. Make use of the available hand sanitizer. Offering plates will be located on the table as you enter. A deacon or usher will greet you to assist in finding a seat. (The seating in the sanctuary has been altered to accommodate social distancing.) We request that only people living in the same household sit side by side, otherwise please keep at least a two-seat separation from others. We ask that you not move about the sanctuary any more than is necessary. Greeting friends and loved ones can be done by a wave from across the room. The hymnals will be removed to prevent the need for sanitizing between services. We will not pass the attendance books. Communion will be single file and each row ushered up. Please maintain six feet of distance between households while in line. Following the service, remain seated until ushered out. Please do not stop to socialize but rather move directly to your vehicles. The restrooms will be cleaned daily. Please be aware that they will not be cleaned following each individual use. The kitchen will be closed.

It is not our intent that these precautions be overly burdensome, but rather that we desire the health and safety of all our worshippers, staff, and volunteers. Striking a balance between no live worship and necessary safety precautions is our goal. If you or someone in your family are feeling ill, please stay home.

The Board of Directors also decided that for health and safety reasons all other on-site activities of the congregation be suspended until school resumes in the fall. This includes, but is not limited to Youth Group, SPARC, Dorcas, VBS, and other social uses of the building. Meetings are encouraged to continue using ZOOM or other internet-based video platforms. This decision was not made lightly but with a heavy heart.

know. follow. share.

Coming together to receive the Means of Grace through Word and Sacrament is the essential nature of the Church. All other activities, while important and valuable, are not essential to the nature of church. We will continue to monitor the impact of the pandemic on our community and if circumstances improve dramatically during the summer, we will revisit our decision. Please join us in prayers for relief from this disease and a return to the regular life of the congregation.

Moving onto other matters... as you may be aware, Thelma Meyerhoff and Cindy Grim are retiring from their positions as Aides in our preschool program and Cheryl Lauer is retiring from her position as Budget Director. Thelma has served as a preschool aide at Immanuel for over 20 years and Cindy for 10. Cheryl has managed Immanuel's finances for over 20 years. We are blessed to have had these wonderful women on our staff. In lieu of the celebration between services we had planned, I would ask you to recognize their service with a card of thanks. I know they would appreciate your words of gratitude for their years of service to the Lord and this congregation.

Additionally, it is time to renew or subscribe to The *Lutheran Witness*. As the Synod's official magazine, The *Lutheran Witness* features stories and commentaries that interpret the contemporary world from a Lutheran Christian perspective. Learn to think and speak like a Lutheran on topics of faith, culture, and family. This is an eleven-issue publication (June/July combined) delivered directly to your home. Price is \$15.96 for the year. Contact the church office by May 27, if you are interested in renewing or subscribing.

Finally, a Special Voters Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, June 7th at 12:15 pm, in our sanctuary. St. John's Lutheran Church in Reinbeck has invited Immanuel to share in calling a pastor. This pastor would be the sole pastor of St. John's and the Assisting Capacity Pastor for Immanuel. A Partnership Agreement has been prepared and will be presented for consideration at the meeting. The Partnership Agreement and Assisting Capacity Pastor Job Description are available in the church office.

The Voter's Meeting will be held live, and all safety procedures used during worship will be followed. If you are unable or uncomfortable with a live meeting, member voting on the proposed agreement will be open at the church office during business hours June 8th-12th and on Sunday, June 14th during worship times. At the conclusion of worship on June 14th balloting will be closed, and a count taken. If the Partnership Agreement passes at both congregations, then the calling process will begin.

If you have any questions regarding the proposed agreement, you may submit them by email to the church and they will be forwarded to the chairpersons of Immanuel and St. John for an answer.

We understand this is not the "usual way", but we are trying to be fair and still conduct the business that needs to be done.

In the Master's Service,

Pastor Kapanka