

Immanuel Lutheran News

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Visit our web site at www.immanuelaltamont.org

June 2020

—From Pastor Wright

Jesus Christ is Lord. That is the message of the church throughout all time. He is not only the creator, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, of all that exists and every person who has ever lived, but he is actively directing affairs in the world today. It may have seemed like that is not the case as we have been sheltering at home with no large church services since March 16. Churches have been closed in every Illinois city and rural area since then. It looks on the surface if Jesus is not Lord, that someone else is in charge. However, God says (in Romans 13:1-2) that every authority that exists God has established. We are to submit to the governing authorities and not rebel against them, or we bring judgment on ourselves. For most of our history as a nation those authorities have kept the peace so that churches can thrive in proclaiming the word of God and bringing God's gifts to people in every community through public services. Overall, the government has been very good to the church in giving us the right to assemble and worship as our conscience guides us.

Since the governor's proclamation on March 18 that all churches should cease worshipping in more than groups of 10, we have had to be creative in how we shepherd the flock at Immanuel. We have put the entire church worship service on the internet as a video and continued our cable TV broadcast. We have put video devotions for adults, youth, and children on Facebook and Youtube. We have held worship in groups of 10 or less on Sunday mornings and Monday evenings with the Lord's Supper. We have moved our offices

into our homes and worked on church administration over the internet and telephone. We have asked for your donations to continue through the mail, the mail slot at church, and an online and cell phone application called Vanco Giving Plus. It's not that our church is shut down. We are still worshipping and preaching, in some ways more than we usually do. We simply are not allowed to meet together as large groups until the government allows.

Many are anxious to get back to regular church services. Some congregations may defy the order, saying that it is a not a set law, merely a proclamation. Last week the government threatened fines and jail time on those businesses that defy the order. The order doesn't say if that applies to churches, but I suspect it does. Some churches have met in large groups. Most haven't. There may be great personal liability for those making decisions to violate government orders, and/or laws. It's not that we will never worship in large groups ever again. It's more about how long do we have to wait?

The local area here has not seen the illness and death that was predicted. Time will tell. It seems we can't stay apart forever. China has seen some relapses into the disease months after society opened up again. As individuals we may support our government's decision or be angry with it.

I encourage everyone to contact the government leaders and tell them that we can keep people safer in churches than they are in grocery stores by limiting our seating capacity, refraining from personal contact, and sanitizing the building and furniture. Ask for churches to be allowed

to return to worship in larger groups with precautions. At the end of this note I have details about some officials to contact.

Until we can meet again in large groups I ask you to pray, read the Scriptures, sing, and encourage others to be faithful in your homes. Come to our small group worship on Sunday mornings. God will deliver us in due time. We need patience and faith. In past times we may have neglected to come together for worship as we should, but now we see how precious the right to assemble is. Get active in the public square to defend your religious freedom. But obey the laws because of the command of God. "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's." Honor our civic leaders and magistrates, for they have to answer to God Almighty for the way in which they used the power that God put into their hands to care for us. If you disagree with them, argue respectfully, and pray for God to change them. But continue to render unto God alone your worship and praise.

We will continue to worship in small groups on Sundays for the duration of the stay-at-home order. Phase Four of the state order allows churches to gather groups of 50 or less. That will continue until there is a vaccine. This is the issue we want our governor to change. The capacity of our church is 500. We can keep family units distanced in our building and accommodate 100-150 in any of our services.

The elders and church council have determined that we will not be returning to large services on Sundays until at least June 7. When we do, here are the guidelines we will follow to safeguard the health of everyone, at least until the disease is "under control."

- People who are vulnerable to illness should continue to worship from home.
- Prevent unnecessary contact with people outside of your family group.

- Sanitize hands.
- No hand shaking.
- Leave offerings in a basket by the door.
- Continue to stream and record online video services.
- Employ continuous line communion with individual cups.
- Organize dismissal after services.
- After each service we will sanitize areas in the building that are touched by people such as doors, pews, and restrooms.
- Encourage the wearing of face masks in the service.
- No meals will be served in the building (other than the Lord's Supper).

I really encourage everyone to come to small group communion worship on Sunday mornings. We follow better health practices than at the supermarkets and no one will be turned away. Go to immanuelaltamont.org to sign up for the next date. If that fills up, we will offer distribution on Monday evenings. Here's the attendance for our first three Sundays.

- Sunday, May 3 124 attended
- Monday, May 4 41 attended
- Sunday, May 10 81 attended
- Monday, May 11 3 attended
- Sunday, May 17 79 attended

Who to contact in government (Please do so respectfully.)

Ask that church services be considered as essential services within the State of Illinois. Ask that Phase Four guidelines would not limit worship facilities to 50 persons, but would be based upon a percentage of capacity of each building.

The Honorable J.B. Pritzker, Governor
207 State House

Springfield, IL 62706

Voice an opinion on the internet at:
<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/gov/contactus/Pages/VoiceAnOpinion.aspx>

Announcing: Vanco Giving Plus. Apps make life easier. With our GivePlus Mobile app, you can use your smartphone to give anywhere, anytime. Make a one-time gift or set up recurring donations. Set up an account or give as a guest. Securely and conveniently manage donations from your phone to give through our mobile app, download the free Vanco GivePlus app from the App Store or Google Play. We also have "text to pay." You can find a link on our web page at immanuelaltamont.org. Or call Barb at the church office and set up automatic money transfers from your bank.

Small Group Worship Under the governor's proclamation we are meeting in small groups on Sunday mornings at short intervals from 8 AM – noon. Sign up at immanuelaltamont.org or call the church office for a spot. The Lord's Supper is offered.

Pastor Wright 217-994-1116

Thank you *to all the people who wrote cards to my mother, Adele Bluschke, after her fall and hospitalization. She is recovering, thanks to God's grace. She received a card almost every day from someone at Immanuel. God bless you all.*
--Lisa Wright

Thank you *to Howard Winter who has been video recording our virtual services. A big thanks to Kyle Stuemke for getting our internet streaming working.*

Thank you *for all the cards and posts on FB for our 55th Wedding Anniversary on May 23.*
Kenny & Judy Mercier

Prayer Corner

- For healing of Curtis Baginski, Freda Beccue, Heath Beccue, Adel Bluschke, Gail Bryan, Tiffany Dunaway, Abbey Franzen, Gert Heiden, Pam Kepley, Cathy Marble, Joe Mathewson, Judy Mercier, JR Newby, Angela Kull Ohnesorge, Deb Pagel, Gary Pryor,

Walter Ruding, Jim Schroeder, Evelyn Shumaker, Norma Siebert, Barbara Smith, Elverna Tappendorf, Ken Trigleth, Nora Wendling, Craig Wolff, Gina Wolff and others.

- For our pastor, church staff, ALIS school staff as they work from home.
- For Lutheran missionaries Ted Krey and Britt Odemba and families.
- For our government for protection of unborn children and elderly.
- For peace in the world, an end to violence in the name of God, and for harmony among nations.
- For those persecuted for their faith.
- For police, fire fighters, emergency medical personnel, and those who serve in our military and their families.

Vacation Bible School – VBS has been postponed to a later date.

No Rummage Sale this year.

On Saturday, June 6th, members of Immanuel Lutheran Church will be hosting a fundraiser on the north parking lot of the church at 203 E Division St in Altamont. Renowned chef, Wayne Willenburg, will be the grill man. Porkburgers, hot dogs, chips & drinks will be available along with Fresh Baked Homemade Pies and other baked goods by Immanuel Ladies Aid. Serving will be from 10:30 – 1:00 pm with proceeds going to the Benevolent Fund for "members in need projects". Please follow the signs. All active social guidelines will be followed.

Donations of baked goods would be appreciated. Please bring them to the north parking lot Saturday, June 6 by 10AM.

CEFS Meals If you plan to pick up a meal call 618-483-6912 the day before to reserve your meal for pick up. Immanuel deliveries are scheduled for 6/15 to 6/26. They will be emailed and in a couple cases: snail mail.