

St. John Lutheran Church + Bingen

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April 3, 2020

Rev. Peter J. Brock
Senior Pastor

Rev. Christopher Maronde
Associate Pastor

Mrs. Pam Selking
Church Secretary

Mr. Andrew Gavrun
Principal - Wyneken
Memorial Lutheran
School

Mrs. Danielle Fuhrman
School Secretary

Mrs. Jessica Gavrun
Music Director

Mr. Don Gresley
President

Dear 8th-grade students and parents,

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord, Jesus Christ.

As I continually pray for you all, knowing the Lord is faithful to His promises to preserve and deliver us, I also am acutely aware of the disappointment and suffering you are currently enduring as many significant events in your life are cancelled. May the Lord's peace and joy, that surpass both human understanding and this moment of hardship, sustain you and encourage you in Christ and His love! I have discussed plans for First Communion and the Rite of Confirmation with our congregational president, Mr. Don Gresley, and our elders, Mr. Roger Hormann and Mr. Ron Fuhrmann, and we all agree that what follows is the most faithful and responsible path forward at this time.

The Rite of Confirmation will be postponed until such time as we are able to rejoice with you fully and without fear or nervousness. As soon as responsibly possible, we will schedule the Rite of Confirmation on the church calendar and look forward to the joyful, festival Divine Service with all the adornments it customarily includes.

In the meantime, and at the discretion of your individual family without any pressure from me or anyone else, you may establish a time for a private examination and subsequent invitation to the Lord's Supper to receive Christ's precious body and blood for the forgiveness of all your sins. The nature of this private examination will be determined by each individual family in consultation with me, and it may be done electronically or however you find comfortable and helpful. Knowing the question will be asked, preparation for this conversation would include reviewing closely the Christian Questions with Their Answers contained in the Small Catechism. This was the assignment for this past week's Wyneken 8th Grade Confirmation Class.

The following notes address the precedent and practice for First Communion prior to Confirmation: Candidates for admission to the Lord's Supper have learned the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. They have received careful instruction in the Gospel and Sacraments. Confessing their sin and trusting in their Savior, they desire to receive the Lord's Supper for the forgiveness of sins and the strengthening of their faith in Christ and their love toward others. Concerning worthy reception of the Lord's Supper, the Small Catechism teaches: "That person is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words: 'Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.' But anyone who does not believe these words or doubts them is unworthy and unprepared, for the words, 'for you' require all hearts to believe." Baptized Christians are admitted to the Sacrament when they have been examined and absolved by their pastor in accordance with the practice outlined in the Augsburg Confession (Article XXV).

If you wish to discuss this and/or establish a time and method for private examination and invitation to the Lord's Supper, please contact me at any time.

In Christ,

Pastor Brock (260-301-1640; pastorbrock@gmail.com)

Cc: Mr. Don Gresley, President; Mr. Roger Hormann, Chairman of the Elders; Mr. Ron Fuhrmann, Elder

