



St Peter's Lutheran Church
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Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ,

Jesus tells his followers, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." One of the ways the rest of the world encounters Jesus is through our love for one another and our love for others. Cancelling our physical gatherings is an act of love, and thus an act also of making Jesus known by loving one another and others in the time of a pandemic. These decisions the last number of months have not been easy, but the goal is that of love and of making Christ known to one another and our community.

We recently sent out an anonymous, online survey to the congregation regarding our response to the present pandemic and our formal worship life together. Thank you to all of you who participated in that online survey. The findings of that survey will be presented to the leadership of this congregation in order to help us not only understand better our congregation, but to make more informed decisions about the future. We take seriously all the input you have provided.

I would like to point out two main sentiments that came out of that survey. One sentiment is a desire for safety. The other sentiment is a desire for the Lord's Supper. These are both good desires. The desire for safety is a desire to be loved and to love one another as a congregation. This is the call of Christ. The desire for the Lord's Supper is also a desire for love, not only to be loved by Christ, but to share in that love together according to the specific promise of God.

We have been working to try to find a way to maintain both of these sentiments because we see them rooted in the love of Christ. With regards to safety, we now have a Plan Administrator who is in supervision of our plan to re-open in the midst of COVID-19. Joe Stemig has stepped into that position; and we are grateful for him. Some of the things we are working on is making sure we have the proper cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer and masks available.

One of the biggest challenges we are still facing in regards to safety is the airflow in our space. Since one of the ways the virus is spread is through respiratory droplets in the air, we need to consider seriously the airflow of our space. Consider some examples, the smell of food cooking in the kitchen can be quite intense. There are lots of particles from the cooking process in the air in that space. However, over time the smell of that food can spread throughout the whole house, so that even if you are upstairs in a bedroom, you recognize what is for dinner. Imagine if I was an asymptomatic carrier of COVID-19 and chose to ride a bus (windows closed) with one other person. Even if we sat 30 ft apart, the longer we are on that bus together the more viral particles I breathe out into that closed space would increase the exposure over time for the other person. Masks do not stop this process, but help slow it down. Consider, this past year there was a Sunday service at St. Peter's in which some of the candles started smoking over half way through the service - not a lot, just a little. The haze of the smoke did not stay up front, but at the end of the service it filled the space. Even with opening windows and doors, it took a while for that to dissipate in the fresh air.

We have no air filtration system for our space and no built in airflow. The fans we have could circulate the air within the space, but recirculating the same air may not be as helpful. Ample access to fresh air is needed. In order for a decent amount of fresh air circulation to occur, we not only need wind, but from certain directions given the size and facing of our windows. Dave Cheesebrow and I continue to discuss this issue. We care about your safety and the safety of others in love, a love that is meant to reveal Christ. For the month of July, we will not be having any indoor gatherings. The possibility of an indoor gathering will be re-evaluated each month and communicated to you all appropriately. At the end of July we will re-evaluate for August.

Though we do not feel we can safely engage in an indoor service at this time, we are going to be trying a gathering outdoors on July 12th at 9:00 am (please note the time). The gathering will focus mainly on sharing the Lord's Supper together. We will have hand sanitizer stations available and masks, if you do not have your own. Seating will be spread out appropriately on the front lawn. We strive for safety in love. We will have the joy of hearing Dan play some music for us. We will be able to see one another and have some conversation together as well. The Lord's Supper will be provided in a safe manner so we can share in that gift and promise of love in Christ together.

In order for this event to occur, a few things are needed. We want to have an extra supply of masks in case someone does not have their own. We also will need some help disinfecting chairs and putting them away after the service. Finally, those that participate need to share in the same mindset of love through safety. If you are willing to make some masks or to help with disinfecting and tear down following the service, please contact me.

Please note for your own expectations, this outdoor gathering will focus mainly on the Lord's Supper. For that reason it will not be an hour long service, but will be a bit less than 30 minutes. If for whatever reason you do not feel safe to come to this outdoor gathering, please stay home. There is no shame in that at all. If you are feeling sick or have been exposed to COVID19 in the 14 days leading up to the 12th, please also stay home. If you have access to the internet, the videos will continue to be provided, even on July 12th. If you would like paper copies of the sermons from those videos, please let me know. Also, please note that if the event is cancelled due to weather related issues, we will move it to the following Sunday, July 19th. If you are thinking of coming, please give me a call or send me an email so we can plan accordingly. If you do not contact me, you are still more than welcome to come.

We continue to strive for the way of Christ, who has given himself for us in love. We will continue to love one another through considerations of safety during this pandemic, as well as endeavoring into ways we can share in the Lord's Supper together. His Spirit of love is in you and me through baptism, not only that we would share in his salvation by grace alone, but that we would live out his love to one another and to others so that God's Son would be revealed to the world.

In Christ,

Pastor Chris Weber

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Please Remember:

- We are having an outdoor gathering focused on the Lord's Supper, July 12th at 9:00 am
- If you are willing to make masks, please let me know so we can have a supply on hand.
- If you are willing to help disinfect and put away chairs following the service, contact me.
- Please contact me if you are considering coming to the outdoor gathering.