

Dear Messiah family,

We are very excited to be able to gather again together, in the building, after such a long time apart. That being said, we want to make sure that we are loving each other and keeping each other safe, and at the same time following all the required guidelines put forth by the governor's office, the bishop's office, and our insurance carrier. That means that worship will be different. Here are some things you need to know before all worship services at Messiah for now:

- We will be worshipping in the Fellowship Hall.
- The fans have been fixed in the Fellowship Hall and will run during the service.
- No singing is allowed inside. The same goes for unison prayers. The lay assistant will say the responses on behalf of the congregation. The Communion liturgy will be shared during the service, but Communion will be served as folks exit the building (no eating or drinking is allowed in the building). There will be a table outside the door where the lay assistants will serve Communion, and the ushers will bring Communion out to those in their cars. We'll sing a song together, from our cars, at the end of each service. Children's sermons will be different, too.
- Anyone who is in a high-risk category should still stay home or stay in the parking lot (the FM transmitter will still be in use, and there will still be videos going out each week).
- No one with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19, or known exposure to a COVID-19 case in the prior 14 days, is permitted to attend.
- Based on social distancing requirements, there is a maximum number of people who can be in the Fellowship Hall, but that number is flexible based on how many people come and the size of the groups who come. The Usher-Greeters will make sure that everyone is spaced out appropriately. If we ever run out of room, we will make the necessary adjustments to our protocols. The "back" row will be by the kitchen counter. The pastor and accompanist will be positioned by the door to outside.
- No matter what, every week, we still have to maintain social distancing and wear face coverings at all times in the building. Only one person is allowed in each bathroom at a time; try to use the facilities at home before coming to church. All worship servants (who will interact and speak the most) will have their temperatures checked before service, and we'll log attendance each service just in case we need to perform contact tracing later on. Usher-Greeters and Communion Assistants will wear gloves, and pre-packaged Communion servings will be used. Offering baskets will be placed by the doors – no offering plates or baskets will be passed. Safety signs will be posted on the doors and in the bathrooms. Please limit your time in the building to the Fellowship Hall, the bathrooms, and the hallway in between. No food or drink may be distributed inside.

- Cleaning crews will disinfect all surfaces before and after each service. Please consider volunteering to help out with the cleaning crews, or for any of the other worship servant duties.
- Any interpersonal visiting/fellowship must be outside, with social distancing, with masks on, even in the parking lot. Unfortunately, that means no handshakes or hugs, but we will still share our love for one another.
- If you are a worship servant, you and your family groups should sit in front row so as not to have to walk through the congregation.

One of our guiding principles through all of this is Luther's explanation of the 5th Commandment in the Small Catechism:

The Fifth Commandment

You shall not murder.

What does this mean?

We are to fear and love God, so that we neither endanger nor harm the lives of our neighbors, but instead help and support them in all of life's needs.

As we return to worship, thank you in advance for the help and support you'll be showing to our neighbors – both long-time members and visitors alike – and protecting them from danger. This seems like a lot – we realize that – but we can handle it. Be patient with everyone and know that things might still get adjusted as we go. Stay tuned to your announcements and e-blasts. And remember – even though it *will* be different, it is good to be together again!