



MT. LEBANON

EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH & SCHOOL

RESUMING IN-PERSON WORSHIP

I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!"
Psalm 122:1

6 June 2020

Dear family,

The words above of Psalm 122 were spoken by travelers as they made their way to the temple in Jerusalem for one of the three special festivals. They **rejoiced** as they went to the house of the LORD!

We also **rejoiced** that we are able to offer opportunities for in-person worship at Mount Lebanon next weekend (6/14 and 6/15 - Saturday at 5:30 pm; Sunday at 9:30 am). We have been waiting for months to gather in-person with our church family around the Word and Sacraments.

It's important to note that in-person worship will be different, and that not everyone should return to campus immediately. Gathering at church presents a unique risk compared to going out in public to run errands. While running errands, we are typically on-the-move and not interacting with any one person for more than a few moments. In worship, however, we spend extended time interacting in the same place with the same people. This increases the risk of infection for everyone. For this reason, worship at first will be different than what we were accustomed to. While we rightly **rejoiced** in being able to go to the house of the LORD, the services will be adjusted.

Please remember that the covid-19 virus is not gone and will most likely continue to spread through our community. The last thing we want to do as a church is to hasten the spread of the virus. While we trust in the Lord to take care of us, we also don't want to put the Lord to the test. For this reason, we ask that you please read carefully the instructions and information

provided by our leadership in this document. We thank you for your understanding, patience, and support during these unusual times.

WORSHIP INFORMATION

- **For the time being we will worship on Saturdays at 5:30 pm and on Sundays at 9:30 am.** The Saturday evening service will be more casual.
- **Attendance at each service will be limited to 75.** This number is approximately 25% of our sanctuary's comfortable capacity (different than actual capacity). Limiting attendance will allow us to more easily apply appropriate social distancing measures. If additional people arrive for one worship service, the new Community Room will serve as an overflow worship space.
- **Those attending in-person worship will need to pre-register each week they attend.** You may register online or by calling or emailing the church office at 414-461-1563 or church@mtlebanonluth.org. We would also ask that you sign in.
- **For the sake of the most vulnerable, we ask you to wear a mask.** The pastors and ushers who greet in the lobby will be wearing masks, as the CDC strongly recommends mask for anyone over age 3, and this will help make many more feel comfortable in the worship space. Masks will be provided for those who do not have their own. The pastor leading worship will not wear a mask while he leads worship and preaches.
- **Online worship will continue.** You will be able to access a Broadcast of the service online using YouTube as previously. Online worship will continue to be offered even after all gathering restrictions have been lifted. We are working to improve our online delivery of live worship.
- **Things will be different.** In general, this is going to look different. It's going to feel different. We simply will not be able to replicate everything we previously did. Not at first. Churches all over the world are learning new ways to operate during this time. Thank you for your understanding as we learn new ways to serve one another well.
- **We will be reevaluating and updating our precautions and plans as time go on.**

GENERAL ENCOURAGEMENTS

- Make worship decisions according to your own comfort level while also respecting the decisions of all others. As Scripture says, "Love always trusts" (1 Cor 13:7). Situations in which there are a great number of conflicting perspectives gives us a unique opportunity to put this command into practice and highlight the beauty of the Christian faith.
- **Individuals at higher risk should consider worshipping from home for now.** Those who are age 65 or older, have chronic lung diseases such as COPD or asthma, serious heart conditions, diabetes, obesity, kidney disease, and/or are immune compromised should seriously consider continuing to worship from home. Worship will continue to be offered online and pastors are willing to make private visits.
- **Individuals feeling sick should worship from home.** Please regularly self-screen at home. If anyone in the household unit has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, shortness of breath, sore throat, cough, diarrhea, headache, or has lost their sense of taste or smell, the whole family unit should stay home.
- **Those who are unable or uncomfortable attending on-campus worship are welcome to stay home and worship online with absolutely no guilt or stigma.** We are a Christian family

who loves, trusts, defends, protects, and looks out for one another. Staying home if you are 'at-risk' is a powerful way for us to love one another right now. Staying at home if you are uncomfortable coming back to campus right now is a decision that will be fully supported.

CLEANLINESS & SOCIAL DISTANCING

- **The worship space will be altered to encourage appropriate social distancing.** Every third pew will be unavailable for use. Worshippers are encouraged to spread out in the sanctuary as much as possible. Families who live in the same household may sit right next to one another. Hymnals, bibles, connection cards, and pens will be removed from the pews. Service folders will not be handed out; the screens will be used to guide all attendees. Offering plates will not be passed. Offerings may be given online or deposited in the designated baskets in the back of the worship space.
- **Practice social distancing throughout your time on campus.** While we all are eager to shake hands or give a hug, especially since we haven't seen each other in a while, please go immediately to a pew in the sanctuary as you enter church. The pastors will greet you in the lobby, though they will not be shaking hands. Please keep visiting to a minimum after worship and do not gather in close proximity to other individuals indoors or outdoors.
- **Use hand sanitizer as you enter and leave church.** There will be hand sanitizer at various locations within the church. Please sanitize hands as soon as you enter and remember to wash them again when you get home.
- **High-contact surfaces (like pews and door handles) will be disinfected after every service.** Cleaners will be following professional best practices on cleaning to minimize risk. If you would like to volunteer to help with cleaning after a worship service, please register online or call the church office at 414-461-1563. Please note that bathrooms will receive a deeper cleaning before and after each weekend, though they will only receive a general wipe-down between services.
- **Holy Communion will be offered** on our regularly scheduled Sundays, the second and fourth Sundays of each month. We will take the precautions we need to safely distribute communion to you. We will explain our process as you come to the service.