



When I am afraid, I put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me? (Psalm 56:3-4 ESV)

March 15, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ at Trinity Lutheran Church,

The purpose of this letter is to update you on the recent discussions regarding our worship services that have been had with the Elders and the Council, as well as inform you about our upcoming Holy Week plans. I will try to be as succinct as possible, which is usually very difficult for me, so no promises!

We continue to be encouraged by the number of people who have been vaccinated (including many of our own members), the relatively low case numbers locally and state-wide, and the even lower local hospitalization numbers. We have also seen an increase in those attending worship regularly and that is an answer to prayers. We pray all of those things continue.

In talking with membership and leadership of our church, we feel the time is right to continue our planning for a return to normalcy when it comes to our life in the church, which has been affected for a full year now. We have purposely not been “sprinting” back, however, because we want to do this safely and effectively for everyone involved.

Here are changes we’ve made, or are planning to make in the near future:

- Our last Saturday service will be March 27th (Palm Sunday Weekend). We are planning to have only one service for Easter—9 a.m. on Sunday. We felt it important to all be together as a church body for this holy day. We will continue after Easter with only one Sunday service (no more Saturday services).
- Holy Week schedule of worship looks like this:
 - Palm Sunday, March 27th and 28th – Saturday at 7 p.m., Sunday at 9 a.m. (Communion)
 - Maundy Thursday, April 1st – 7 p.m. (Communion)
 - Good Friday, April 2nd – 7 p.m.
 - Easter Sunday, April 4th – 9 a.m. (Communion)
- We recognize that some people may not be as comfortable with this change to one Sunday service. Therefore, we plan still to continue all of our audio and video recording of the sermons, as well as the live-stream of services on CommunO2. We felt that going to one service was the best plan, however, that will serve the congregation as a whole, until such time everyone feels comfortable returning to in-person services.
- We’ve begun to add in more hymns to our worship service. This will continue and be up to three hymns per service by Holy Week (Palm Sunday is March 28th), plus a sung liturgy part or two.

- Our liturgy will continue to return to a more normal order. I intend to offer Children's Talks in the Sunday service when there are children in the pews.
- We are going to remove the ropes separating pews to offer more capacity starting Palm Sunday, March 28th, but still encourage everyone to use the whole sanctuary to spread out as they feel comfortable and to keep space between those in the same pew.
- We will begin a simplified coffee hour in the fellowship hall after service for those who would like to attend beginning Easter Sunday, April 4th, spreading out around the fellowship hall and having many of the items served at the tables instead of from the kitchen window.

Things we are still evaluating for the future:

- The distribution method for Holy Communion is still being discussed by the Elders. We will keep it "as is" for now, with the exception of Easter when we will be using a more "continuous" method (no stopping at the front table). After Easter, we will resume what we have been doing. The Elders will continue to evaluate this topic.
- We will ask that everyone continues to wear a mask or face covering while attending service and while in the various parts of the church building.

We hope that these changes will serve you and the whole body of Christ well, as we regain much of what we have been missing, but more importantly, as we appreciate all that God continues to graciously bless us with week in and week out. As always, with any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me or an Elder.

(It still ended up being a lengthy letter!)

Continued Lenten Season Blessings,

Pastor Joe Polzin
and the Board of Elders