

April 29, 2020

Dear Holy Ones of God,

Grace and peace to you in Christ, our Good Shepherd, who walks with us through the valley of the shadow of death.

As you have likely heard, the Directed Health Measures in Nebraska are scheduled to allow churches to gather after May 4th. We are planning to return to corporate worship on May 10th. While we are awaiting the Governor's guidelines, the elders and I thought it good to communicate our preliminary plans for a safe return to worship. To be sure this is subject to change as we learn more. We will make a video available that illustrates our plans. Here they are in brief:

1. Upon entering the church, you will be ushered to an available seat to ensure 6 feet of separation between family units.
2. You will find offering baskets and bulletins in the narthex. We will not be passing offering plates. (Hymnals and fellowship pads will be removed.)
3. For communion we will not kneel at the rail. There will be three stations where the pastor and elders will offer the host and the chalice or individual cups. The communicants will walk to each station after being directed by the elder to ensure 6 foot of space. Especially for those communing from the chalice, please note we will use fortified wine with a higher alcohol content. Also we will wipe the rim with a cloth soaked in pure grain alcohol. You will approach the altar from the side aisle and return to your pew via the center aisle. The pastor and elders will wash their hands well before communion and will use hand sanitizer.
4. After the service, we will dismiss each pew. Please do not congregate inside the church, but move to the outside after you've been dismissed.
5. After church, we will have a cleaning team wipe down surfaces with suggested cleaning supplies.

Please Note if you are at a higher risk for complications, we encourage you to stay home. We will continue to live stream the service, and to provide DVD's for those without Internet or cable access. **Also, if you show any signs of sickness, we ask you to stay home. See link from CDC for symptoms:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

If you plan to attend worship on May 10th would you please email us your name and the number attending at peacelutheranhastings@gmail.com or call the church office at (402) 462 – 9023.

As we consider how we might begin to worship together we do so first with the desire to honor God. Next, we desire to show respect to the government and care for the health of our members. We also want those outside the church to see that we are being conscientious. While some might not agree with our choices, we pray that they might see that all risks, have been weighed and taken seriously.

Let me close by saying that charity toward one another is paramount. We are free in these matters. No one should feel as though they are being less of a Christian by staying home or refraining from Holy Communion. Nor should someone feel as though they are being dangerous if they do go. All should seek God's leading and follow as their conscience calls them. Please feel free to contact Pr. Gaunt with questions.

While pandemics are not new, this experience is new to us. Uncertainty abounds. That which is sure and certain is that Jesus who was crucified, has risen. We too shall arise. We are forgiven and we are free. God be praised!

On behalf of the elders we greet you with love.

In Christ,

Pastor Gaunt