

May 26, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ at Peace,

This Sunday, we celebrate the church holiday of Pentecost – the day God poured out His Holy Spirit to the disciples and His Church. Pentecost is a wonderful, holy day as we reflect on what it means to be the Church – and how best to communicate God’s Good News to all people!

Communicating the Gospel has been a challenge we have struggled with during these past months! But we know – we believe – in the Holy Christian Church and the Communion of Saints; we believe that God the Holy Spirit continues to call, gather, enlighten and sanctify the whole Christian Church on earth; and we believe that the Holy Spirit keeps us together with Jesus Christ in the one true faith! This is our Pentecostal confession!

As a worshipping community over the past weeks, we have elected to abide by the Federal and State guidelines and recommendations. We did so, not under compulsion but, out of a spirit of ‘loving our neighbor as ourselves.’ Thank you for your understanding and patience; thank you for putting the best construction on these decisions, knowing they were not made flippantly.

That being said, beginning this past weekend, our Indiana State-issued guidelines regarding stay-at-home orders were lightened once more. Residents of Indiana are able to move a little more freely in the area, and businesses are opening back up.

**\*\*\*At Peace we are continuing to allow people to decide for themselves whether they will attend worship, with only one restriction: if you are feeling ill, please stay home and follow up with your doctor!\*\*\***

Here are some points to remember regarding our worship:

- Our worship times are **SUNDAY ONLY** at 8:00 and 10:00 am. There are no Saturday night services right now.
- We will continue to have online worship services available through our website, YouTube, and Facebook, even as we offer in-person worship services.
- We are asking people to continue wearing face masks and sanitize when they are in the building.
- We will be practicing social distancing in the building, and will be using only every other pew bench in the sanctuary – *you might not sit where you normally sit.*
- Because we are not having our Saturday night worship, we will be having a variety of music during our 10:00am worship times. This music will include organ, piano, and pre-recorded video-led music from time to time.
- We are planning for Holy Communion to resume in the coming weeks, as we are able to safely administrate and distribute.

*(Please continue to the next page.)*

**Please know that with all the changes, worship might "feel" a little different; that's okay! Worship isn't about our feelings, as it is about hearing the truth of God's Word!**

**Here are some other things to keep in mind, as you return:**

- ✓ We are recommending everyone put on a face covering before entering the building.
- ✓ We will continue to place hand sanitizers in high-contact locations and will ask staff, members, and guests to sanitize their hands as they enter the building
- ✓ We will have marked seating, alternating rows – *this means you might not sit in the 'usual' spot!* Pews marked with a blue X will be left vacant.
- ✓ We will NOT be using paper bulletins for the time being. This decision is for sanitary as well as pragmatic reasons, since we are still unsure about attendance numbers right now.
- ✓ We will continue to implement non-contact greetings.
- ✓ At the conclusion of the service, we will dismiss worshipers in a way that supports social distancing.
- ✓ We will not be offering coffee or snacks between services.
- ✓ We will continue to clean between each service, disinfecting high-contact surfaces.
- ✓ And you will see readily visible signage to remind everyone of best hygiene practices.

As you have done, please continue to make good, sound, and healthy decisions for yourselves, for your friends and family, and for the entire community. Do not regard this as an occasion to 'simply return to normal.' *The virus continues to plague our community, and we will act with appropriate caution and sensitivity! Thank you for your care and concern for yourself and others as we attempt to resume a more regular worship practice!*

I continue to be willing and able to set up **PRIVATE COMMUNION VISITS** during the week. Please send me an email (PastorT@plcms.org) or call me to set up a time.

Finally, as in weeks before:

1. **We will continue to use the Internet for our worship broadcasts.** Please utilize these services as appropriate to your situation. And we will continue using our website ([plcms.org](http://plcms.org)) and Facebook ([facebook.com/plcms](https://facebook.com/plcms)) for links to services, resources, devotional materials, and additional announcements.
2. Our staff will continue to work from home as much as possible.
3. Our weekly e-newsletter will continue to be sent out with information and announcements; PLEASE READ IT OVER! If you have not received it, please check your SPAM/Junk folders. If it isn't there, email Gina and she will get you on our contact list (GTeeple@plcms.org).

I would like to conclude with words from Hebrews 12:1-3:

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard and keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.

Pastor Jeffrey Teeple