

# Messiah Lutheran Church

July 23, 2020; 6:00pm

# Pastor's Report

Rev. Chuck Harris

We began the month of June with hopes that the number of coronavirus cases in King County would level off and decrease. Now, as July nears completion, we are seeing an increase in cases throughout the county and our state. Much of our nation is experiencing similar or even more dramatic increases. Additionally, school districts in our south-county area have announced that students will begin school in the fall entirely through distance learning.

As is Messiah's policy and practice, we follow the lead of the Auburn School District as we plan our congregational operations and events. Therefore, Messiah Staff will begin to focus on enhancing our online options for worship, fellowship, and faith formation through the fall and into winter. I would like the church council to consider making this online focus official at our August council meeting.

I am asking staff to plan now, and council to make official next month, this online focus because I still hold out hope that there may be hybrid options that will be safe and effective if cases of the coronavirus stabilize in our area over the next month. However, as our most recent worship survey indicates, large parts of our congregation are not yet comfortable with large-scale congregational gatherings.

I would like to point out that this meeting will be the last "official" council meeting of our Deacon, Traci Vatne. Her last official day of work is August 9. On that day, we will be celebrating God's love and grace and Traci's 30+ years of ministry in the Lutheran church during a festive service of worship. Although, she has one last "official" day of work: an amazing celebration of her life and ministry at a real, in-person, blowout party that is TBD. When this party happens, it will be both an opportunity to say "thank you" properly to Traci and mark the end of the restrictions and distancing this pandemic has brought to our lives. In that sense, it will be a double celebration of love, joy, and hope!

Please see other attachments and some mission-specific areas and updated comments below:

## Worship

- No in-person worship will continue for the time being. No date for in-person worship has yet been set. Live online worship and a variety of pre-recorded worship opportunities will continue.
- Re-opening to in-person worship is extremely complex in a pandemic environment. There are a great many guidelines available but not much actual experience. It will be a long process! Current increase in coronavirus cases suggests that even limited in-person worship may not be advised come September. Council should make official decision at August meeting.

## Worship Survey Results:

- See Council Report
- Online volunteer options are being tested.

## FIKES

- Member Mark Sims has generously donated an electrostatic sanitization process. Mark himself has been to the church to sanitize the offices, main restrooms, kitchen, and parts of the gathering space.

- Mark will expand the process to the rest of the building as we re-open.

## Staff

- All staff continue to work hard to produce and present online worship and faith formation opportunities.
- Staff continue to come into office at staggered times. There is an in-person staff meeting on Tuesdays, but social distancing is practiced.
- Jan continues to manage some "front-end" social media activities and all "back-end" technical changes. With funds from the Endowment Committee, she is redoing our website and more tightly integrating our social media options. See attached proposal from Jan to the Endowment Committee.
- The Personnel Team will meet in early August to hear from the Faith Formation Team and evaluate staffing duties and configuration moving forward.

### **Communication**

- We continue to work to provide information across all our social media channels, along with periodic distribution of written material to those who do not utilize the internet.

### **Building Use**

- Building continues to be closed.
- Office is closed.
- The only scheduled groups continue to be Sunday afternoon and Thursday evening Community Meals. The meals are distributed outside as “grab and go”. Folks inside fixing food are social distancing.
- Same is true for Wednesday morning foodbank.

### **Operations**

- Janitorial service is now 4 hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
- Garbage collection continues to be bi-weekly with smaller bins.
- Temperature controls set with less people in building in mind.

### **Care**

- Lots of phone calling, emails, and Zoom chats
- Care Team Zoom meeting next week on Thursday.