

March 2, 2021

Dear Friends,

Worship is an important part of our life together and so, our Parish Reopening Taskforce has met throughout the pandemic and offered recommendations to the Church Councils about the various ways we use our church buildings with Church Councils making final decisions. Grace and Our Saviour's leadership will continue making decisions regarding our church that follow health and scientific recommendations and take the health and safety of our neighbor into consideration.

At our March 1 meeting, the Reopening Taskforce decided to recommend reopening the churches to in-person worship beginning Sunday April 11 following the guidelines below.

Should you come to in-building worship?

- *If you and your family are able to utilize the worship services we webcast and broadcast on WTCO channels 18 and 618 and grow in your faith, be at peace if you choose to continue worshipping in this way until you are comfortable returning to in-person church services.*
- *If you are in a "high risk" category regarding COVID-19 or you simply are cautious regarding the risk of infection or infecting others, please stay home, and be at peace knowing you are doing the right thing.*
- *Once in-person worship in our churches resumes, Pastor Peter will no longer be present at the Peace Lutheran broadcast and webcast. This should not discourage you from continuing to worship at home if this is the best option for you. Our partnership with Peace Lutheran and other ELCA churches has always been something to celebrate. But during this challenging time, our partnership is more important than ever as we strive to worship and minister in new ways. We are in this together.*

However,

- *If you feel the need to be in the physical presence of others for worship, you are invited to come.*
- *If you spiritually long to come into the church for prayer and to hear the good news, please come.*
- *If you have not been able to use the broadcast and webcast services, please come.*
- *If you feel called to volunteer to help others worship indoors, consider volunteering to usher, record attendance, sanitize, or offer your gifts in other ways.*

Let us hold one another with love. Let us not judge or criticize those who choose to worship at home, nor those who choose to worship inside the church building.

Pastor Peter and the Reopening Taskforce

Our first priority is to love and care for our neighbors by protecting the health of the congregation and community. These guidelines are based on the guidance of public health officials. We may change our practices or recommendations based on local conditions or updated health information. We will take steps to minimize the transmission of COVID-19, however, there is a risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19 by attending in person gatherings; by attending you assume this risk. **Worship in the church buildings will cease if Trempealeau County's 7-day rolling average of COVID cases reaches 25 or more per 100,000 for two weeks in a row.**

Before attending in-person worship at Grace or Our Saviour's, please consider:

- Those who are high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should continue to shelter in place.
- Please self-evaluate for symptoms of illness and stay home if you are ill, or have been in contact with someone who is ill or someone who has been referred for testing.

When you arrive at the church building for worship:

- Masks are required and shall be worn in the church buildings at all times. Even if you have been vaccinated or had COVID-19, you must wear a mask.
- The church building will be open 10 minutes before worship.
- The only door open will be the entry under the canopy (parking lot side.)
- A recorder will sign in your household and ask for your phone number. This information is for the church's use if contact tracing is necessary.
- Hand sanitizer will be used upon entry to the buildings.
- High contact surfaces shall be sanitized after a group has met.
- Six feet distancing (or more) is required between households.
- Seating will be scattered and distanced, with one household per pew. Sit where there are pew cushions. You will be ushered to your seat. (It is likely you will not be able to sit in your usual spot).
- Hymnals will not be used. The service will be projected at OSLC.
- Because the coronavirus is spread easily through breath, we will not practice congregational singing at this time.
- Offering can be made by dropping them in an offering plate near the door.
- The Little Lambs area is not open at this time.
- Ushers will dismiss you. Please exit directly.
- There will be no receiving line or hand shaking.
- The restrooms in the lower level will be available if needed.