

Indoor and In-person worship at St. John's Lutheran Church

The Covid-19 Taskforce, in connection with our Church Council has worked hard to provide safe and effective ways of gathering at St. John's, with primary focus spent on worshipping together. We understand that this process has been difficult and almost impossible to keep every person in our congregation satisfied, but we can and will continue to listen to all concerns and continue to provide options so that all congregates and guests feel safe and cared for in public worship or when visiting St. John's, in-person or online. We will also continue to follow the CDC guidelines provided on the CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html> which are updated on a regular basis and subject to change.



In October, we plan to move into our green phase allowing for indoor and in-person worship at St John's. If weather allows, we will continue to worship outdoors, however, we understand that sooner or later we will need to move indoors. This letter will share a schedule of Sunday morning activities and details about how indoor- in person gatherings will work.

Sunday Morning Schedule

9:00am- Virtual Sunday School (schedule provided and available online)

10:00am – In Person Worship at St. John's
(Radio Station: 97.7)

11:00am – Online Worship – Zoom, Facebook Live and YouTube

Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9078365134?pwd=OEE2K002Vky4b0JCeWx5T2U3YmRRQT09>

Meeting ID: 907 836 5134

Passcode: 407818

Facebook Live - <https://www.facebook.com/St.JohnsAbbottstown/live>

YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLYusK7PV28KOqSVH6xpbFA>

In-Person Worship (Starting Sunday, October 4th)

We plan to provide outdoor worship for as long as possible. Outdoor worship will take place in the rear of the church. Even when we move indoors, individuals or households that would like to stay in their cars to worship will be able to listen to the church service over the radio as long as they are parked in or near the church. Please make sure a greeter or usher knows you are staying in your car, so that they can provide you with a bulletin and communion.

Indoor Worship – As a soft opening, when indoor worship is necessary it will take place in the Fellowship Hall. The reason for starting in the Fellowship Hall is because the Sanctuary painting project will start in October. The doors to the church will be opened no more than 10 minutes prior to the start of worship and people will be asked to sit in family groups. Please note the doors that are marked for entering the building and exiting the building and social distancing and masks are required following the CDC guidelines.

Worship Sign Up- Starting in October we will need all persons planning on coming to worship to sign up. You can call the church office or use the online sign up link attached to our worship emails and our website homepage. Our worship attendance will allow for 65 people to attend indoor worship. You do not need to sign up if you do not plan to come indoors.

Wearing Masks -Masks are required when arriving at worship and if our worship service remains outdoors can be removed once you are seated and social distancing is practiced. Masks are required to be worn inside the building and must stay on during worship.

Holy Communion – Communion Fellowship Cups will be handed out when you arrive at the church. Communion will be the last part of the liturgy on Sunday morning. Communion will be taken from your seat or you have the choice to take it once you leave the building. Communion cups can also be picked up at the church office if you plan to worship with us on Zoom and would like to participate in receiving.

No Singing – When we move indoors, we are asking that no one sing. We will have music recorded and shared for meditation.

We are hopeful that by following these steps and guidelines we can safely worship together. This is our primary goal. It will not be the same, but it is one step closer to seeing each other and joining in the Word and Sacrament of Jesus Christ. I continue to pray for our congregation as we navigate these challenging times. Please know that the Covid-19 Task Force as well as our church council do not make these decisions lightly and we have followed the guidance of the Lower Susquehanna Synod and local and state officials. If you have any concerns or questions you can reach out to me at atownpastor@comcast.net, or our COVID-19 Task Force Chair, Paul Minnich at pfm108@gmail.com. We are both open to listening and doing our absolute best for the sake of the church and mission we share in Jesus' name.

Grace and Peace,

Rev. Shawn Berkebile