



Emmanuel Lutheran Church
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May 6, 2020

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This past Sunday was a great day for me! I was reinvigorated after leading worship and giving God's people His holy gifts after such a long break. It wasn't all good though. I missed those of you who couldn't make it and I wish this virus hadn't separated us as it has. Just to remind you, it's okay if you don't feel like you can worship at this time because you're afraid or apprehensive about gathering in large groups. I know we all have different attitudes and I respect yours entirely. I also remind you, if you need anything, please call me. If you want to receive the Lord's Supper, we can have a private communion service anytime. And when you feel more comfortable about returning for worship, I'll greet you with open arms (or at least a wave if we're still supposed to "social distance").

This brings me to a second point, some encouragement. We'll continue to stream the church services on Facebook and posting bulletins and sermons on the website. I pray that they're a blessing for those who can't join us in person yet. However, as easy as it is to watch service in your sweatpants and with your coffee, don't let it become a habit. Don't use the availability of online worship as an excuse to skip worship simply for convenience's sake. If you're nervous or unable to worship that's one thing. But if you stay home and watch because it's easier than getting dressed and coming to church, please reconsider. Church services are not just about receiving God's gifts, they're also about singing His praises and encouraging other Christians in their faith. I know some of you might be worried about your hair (I'm shaggier than I've been in decades) but we're all in the same boat!

This brings me to a third point, also some encouragement. It's said that it takes anywhere from twenty-one days to a year to make a behavior into a new habit. If you've been somewhat disconnected from Emmanuel, the last seven weeks may have engrained a new habit of not even thinking about Sunday worship. This isn't a good habit for any of us to develop! If you find yourself not missing worship and receiving God's gifts, I urge you to repent and ask Him to help you recover zeal for His house. We're temporarily separated by circumstances, but the key word is "temporarily" for God intends us to worship together as often as possible. Getting out of the habit of worship was forced upon us, so it will take some concerted effort to get back into the habit of weekly worship. You're not alone for the Holy Spirit will help you, as will your Christian brothers and sisters.

I've said it before, but it bears repeating, I miss you all. It was great to see some of you on Sunday and I can't wait until this is all done when we can fill our sanctuary with our bodies and our praises. Until then, you're in my prayers and under God's watchful care. May God keep each of you safe until we can meet again!

In the name of the Risen Christ,
Pastor

P.S. Please see the May newsletter (available at lakeviewemmanuel.com or in the narthex) to see the steps we're taking to make sure the church is clean and the risk of illness is mitigated.