



Bethlehem Star/Good Tidings from Zion

May 2020

In theory I should have had a newsletter out last week, but it's hard to even know what to write about that I haven't already said in notes and updates, Facebook Live messages and Sunday sermons. At this point, it is still unclear when we will be able to gather again in person. The requirements that we'd need to meet even during Phase 1 reopening, which would begin after two weeks of declining cases, would be very difficult in our spaces.

Bethlehem Council met last week. Zion's council meets this Saturday, but there's still not enough to go on to make definitive decisions about when to reopen and how to do it.

Most likely we will continue to worship with Zoom alone for awhile and then maybe a combination of Zoom and in person. One possibility might be to continue Zoom only through phase 1 for regular worship, but maybe after there have been two weeks of declining cases we could consider some small groups gathering at church at different times for communion.

By all the guidelines I've seen, visitation to folks in care centers and retirement facilities would be forbidden at least through phase 2, which would be after about 6 weeks of declining cases. There aren't guidelines I've seen on communion home visits so once there's been a 2-4 week period of declining cases, I'll likely reach out to homebound folks. People who are at higher risk are advised to avoid going out into public spaces, including worship, until phase 3, which is after 6 weeks of declining cases.

There are now questions about whether singing should be allowed, because it apparently increases release of infected droplets and possibly aerosolized virus. Communion practices, sharing of the peace, and passing the offering plate won't be like they were for a long time.

There is a lot we don't know. What we do know is that things are going to be very different for a long time, and there may be some things that may never be the same.

As this goes on, I know that I'm struggling with a growing sense of loss...a loss of what was...a loss of trips and events looked forward to...a loss of time with family and friends in someone's house instead of in boxes on a screen. People who lose loved ones to Covid 19, or who lose precious time with loved ones dying from other causes will experience the raw pain of literal death. For many of us it's more the small deaths. Earlier on it seemed easier to leap to the promise of resurrection. I find it harder now. But it is no less a reality.

We follow a savior who has already been through death and who will lead us through it to new life. Trusting in that seems a thin thread right now, at least to me. But it is nonetheless a thread that won't break.

Christ's peace,

Pastor Kris

Life Events

Life goes on in the midst of pandemic and we have things to celebrate!



Maverick Brown from Bethlehem is graduating from Raymond Central High School. He plans to study welding at Southeast Community College.

Sydney Brown from Bethlehem is graduating from Concordia University with a degree in Biology with an emphasis in Human Biology and minors in Chemistry and Physical Science. She plans to get a masters in Public Health to work in Epidemiology, but she will take a gap year to decide her focus in Epidemiology

Jordan Nielsen will be graduating from Waverly High School.



On May 9, Miranda Unverferth, from Bethlehem, will marry Samuel Otte in a small family ceremony. They are planning a larger celebration in September. They will live in Lincoln where Sam has a math teaching job with Lincoln Public Schools and Miranda will complete her student teaching

On May 23, Ronnie Brust, from Zion, will marry Trevor Grace in a small family ceremony. They also plan a larger celebration in the fall. Ronnie teaches English Language Learning at Culler Middle School and Trevor is a Pharmacy student at UNMC.



In March, Lauren and Vagas Mathieson and their son Nash from Zion welcomed Nora Rose to their family.

Youth/Children ministry

We will have several kids who are either in or approaching middle school when we typically begin confirmation. I would like to meet with families in the fairly near future. I'm hoping to be able to do it in person but if we get too much in to June and don't feel it's safe we may need to use Zoom.

Bethlehem/Zion Worship

Time: May 10, 2020 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Phone - 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 812 698 997

Password: 183252