



Pastor Kris—402-499-4993

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[Bethlehem Lutheran Church - Davey](#)

Zoom log in information and the worship bulletin for each week can be found on our website on the “Worship in the Pandemic” page

Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
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### *Update on the Re-opening Conversation*

It has been ten weeks since we last gathered in person for worship. As our state and nation gradually open up, the councils and I have been having conversations and reading recommendations for churches. I’m eternally grateful that I serve in the two congregations that I do and that nobody is pushing to reopen for in-person worship too soon.

We still don’t know when we will physically gather again for worship. We are looking for a fairly steady two week drop in the number of new cases. Lancaster County has definitely dropped compared to three weeks ago, but it’s sort of plateaued. Saunders County more than doubled over about 10 days, but seems also to have plateaued.

Phase 1 reopening by the recommendations of the CDC, the ELCA, and Church Mutual, our church liability insurance carrier, would entail so much restriction in our small spaces it’s not worth trying to do worship in the buildings. For now, Zoom and mail contact seem to be working pretty well, all things considered.

In conversations with the councils, it seems unlikely we’ll return to gathering for worship during June. It is possible that we will find a way to offer communion in the latter part of June for those who want it. It would possibly be outside at each church following Zoom worship. I may also contact more homebound people to consider a visit.

Here is the basic science as I understand it and as it pertains to the decisions we have to make.

The Covid 19 virus is spread primarily through the air. There may be some contact spread as well, but it now seems that it’s a less efficient way for the virus to spread. However, the CDC continues to recommend caution with surface contact including avoiding handling shared items, maintaining good handwashing, using hand sanitizer and so on.

Most spread seems to be direct person to person. That can happen in two ways:

Infected droplets that spray when someone coughs, sneezes, or possibly sings or speaks loudly. The droplets can travel about 6 feet and then fall to the ground. Masks help keep the droplets from spraying and protect others.

Aerosolized virus – this is basically the virus floating around in the air from someone who is infected. Aerosolization can occur with coughing, sneezing, talking, and singing, but it also spreads just by breathing. And it hangs suspended in the air for as long as 2-3 hours. Staying six feet away helps less with this. Homemade masks still seem to prevent the release of aerosolized virus if they are more than one layer - probably not as much as with droplets

Based on the science and current recommendations, here are the things we will need to consider:

The length of time a group is gathered in an enclosed space matters, regardless of spacing.

This means beginning with outdoor worship might be a better option

Many people, especially younger ones, can be infected and contagious and never know it. Maintaining 6 feet of distance means we could maybe get 24 people in Bethlehem's buildings, and maybe slightly more at Zion. It depends on who actually comes and we may need to have people "register" for a particular worship service.

Although I've tried to look for actual studies about singing, they are much fewer and less conclusive than the studies on masks. The ELCA has recommended not singing for now. Church Mutual didn't mention it. This will be re-addressed before we actually gather. I hope we'll have more information by then

Depending when we start, masks will most likely be required. Masks don't do as much to protect the wearer, but they do help protect others if an infected person wears a mask. The CDC recommends that higher risk people stay home until phase 3 reopening. That would be after about six weeks of declining new cases.

We will likely continue some form of online worship indefinitely – probably Zoom.

One more final plea – please don't yield to the temptation to make this a partisan political issue. If you would like more conversation, I'd love to talk by phone or Zoom...or if you're in a lower risk group at a park over coffee. Remember that I have been an internist as well as a pastor. I'm not an expert in either virology or epidemiology, but I do know a bit of medical science and I know my way around clinical studies reasonably well. I'm not panicked by any stretch. But the things we are being asked to do are based on the best medical advice we have at a given time to reduce the number of deaths. Does that change as we learn more? Of course. But that doesn't mean we are being lied to as a part of some big plot. Our call is to love our neighbor...doctors and scientists can help tell us how in the midst of this pandemic.

Please feel free to contact me or one of the council members if you have questions or concerns.

Christ's peace,

*Pastor Kris*



Here is the log in information for worship Sundays, 10 am. This will be the same through June:

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85726164712?pwd=ZHZpTctJKzZiUjZkNjRsNUVNai9JUT09>

Phone number: 312 626 6799

Meeting ID: 857 2616 4712

Password: 153512

One touch mobile: 16699009128,,85726164712#,,1#,153512#

Church offerings can be mailed to:

Mike Unverferth

2800 W. Branched Oak Rd.

Raymond, NE 68428

## *The Holy Spirit*

My Facebook Live meditation is still in the works and I want to get these in the mail for those who need the bulletin for Sunday. But here's the gist.



Sunday we are celebrating the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is often symbolized by a dove. But on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes in wind and fire—much wilder and unpredictable.

Sometimes my experience of the Holy Spirit has been dovelike—the Spirit can indeed bring me peace when I'm troubled. The Spirit can bring calm and clarity when I need to act.

Other times, this is more like my experience. Life can be a wild ride, with ups and downs and corkscrews and even riding upside down. But notice that the character shown as the Holy Spirit is holding the boy's hand. The Spirit might take us on a wild ride through life, but she's always sitting right with us, holding our hand in the scary spots and bringing us to land safely.

May the Spirit bring you calm when you need it...shake you up when you get complacent...and hold your hand when your life is turned upside down.

