NEWSLETTER

St. John's Lutheran Church 101 W. Martin Street Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401

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The Rev.Matthew A. Day - Pastor



prodainer

AUGUST 2020

IN-PERSON WORSHIP TO RESUME AUGUST 23 (HOPEFULLY...)

After the Governor's press conference on July 13, the committee on reopening the church and the council met to discuss the influx of cases and our willingness to potentially expose worshipers to the virus. It was decided to wait a few more weeks and review the numbers at the August 17 Council Meeting.

The good news: we are ready to go with just a day or two's notice.

If you do not feel comfortable gathering for worship, you can still gather with us online or on the phone.

BOTH WAYS OF WORSHIP ARE

BOTH WAYS OF WORSHIP ARE VALID AND HOLY.

We want to stress that you are sick, think you might have been exposed to the virus, or if you are in the vulnerable population for contracting the virus, you should stay home and worship with us through the phone or online.

BACKPACKS FOR KIDS

Packing Dates:

- Saturday, August 15 from 10am-noon
- Sunday, August 23 after worship

Please wear a mask and follow social distancing practices while packing the backpacks.

And we are still In need of donations! \$30 fills one backpack with all the needed school supplies. To date, we have raised around \$4,000 and we have a goal to fill 439 backpacks. We will be taking the backpacks directly to 8 schools. And if you have given, THANK YOU!

Donate online at www.stjohnsmartinsburg.org or by mail.

Make sure you mark on the memo line"Backpacks for Kids"

This ministry Is a partnership between St. John's Lutheran Church and the Lions Club of Martinsburg.

TWO WAYS TO WORSHIP

(If there is inclement weather, we will hold worship via online and over-the-phone)

OUTDOOR WORSHIP

Starting July 26

Worship at 10am in the Parking lot

OR

VIRTUAL WORSHIP

Worship at 10am VIA Facebook Live or on over the phone

Access worship by visiting the following:

www.facebook.com/stjohnsmartinsburg/live

For Non-Facebook Users:

Access worship by going to https://tinyurl.com/ya9f4sak (You may need to enter the meeting ID and password... see below)

Or you can call 1-301-715-8592

When Prompted, enter the Meeting ID and Password:

Meeting ID: 991 8358 5812

Password: 745576

If you need a toll-free option, please contact Pastor Matt.



A plan to reopen and return safely

Reopening

- It is important that we listen to data and not desire.
- All none essential activities are canceled until further notice. Essential activities of the church include:
 - Worship
 - Funerals
 - Weddings
 - · Baptisms
 - Friends Feeding Friends and other feeding ministries
- We will continue to livestream and use the conference call system until the pandemic is over. This includes Weddings, Funerals, and Baptisms.

What will in-person worship and church life look like once we reopen?

- I. If you are sick, you need to stay home. If you show symptoms when you attend worship, you will be asked to leave.
- Everyone attending worship on a particular Sunday will need to sign in. Ushers will be writing your name down so that, in the event of someone contracting the virus, we can assist in contract tracing.
- Social distancing must be kept. Council members will be on hand to enforce social distancing among members attending inperson worship. No Coffee Hour. No physical contact of any kind including hugging, fist bumps, hand shakes or elbow taps.
- 4. We will need to sit at least 6 feet away from each family attending worship. Ushers will seat people in order to maintain distance and will then help with dismissing people at the end of worship.
- Masks need to be worn outside during worship, even outside. We will have extra masks on hand for people who forget their masks and for visitors who did not bring one.

- An usher will seat you when you come to worship. Please bring a chair with you from home. We will have chairs on hand if you forget to bring one.
- 7. We will offer hand sanitizer for people to use while in worship. People are encouraged to bring their own and use it.
- 8. Lysol wipes will be placed outside of the bathrooms so that people can use them to wipe down surfaces before and after use. Bathrooms will be opened in Luther Hall. We ask that you limit trips inside to use the restroom.
- Posters will be posted around the church/parking lot reminding people of proper social distancing.
- 10. There will be no acolytes during this time. Pastor Matt will take care of the reading the lessons or will prerecord the lessons.
- 11. The offering plate will be placed in the back of the church/ parking lot and not passed. An usher will be in charge of making sure the box is protected.
- 12. The church nursery is closed until further notice.
- 13. Communion will distributed under one kind. The host will be distributed by the pastor. The pastor will be wearing gloves and a mask. Please put your mask on before receiving the host. Congregants will be asked to hold your hands up so that I can drop the wafer into a congregants hand. If that is not possible, we can have have small cups available so that these persons can just hold the cup out.
- 14. For those who cannot come to worship because they are in the <u>vulnerable population</u>, Pastor Matt will take communion to their home and distribute the elements to them using the rite typically used for those are informed or shut-in. Distribution will take place on the front porch. Persons wishing to receive communion will need to contact Pastor Matt and schedule a time for him to come to your home.
- 15. After each worship, the chairs used will need to be wiped down and cleaned.
- 16. No outside groups will be allowed to use our facilities with the exception of feeding ministries that take place outside.
- 17. In-person Choir rehearsal will be canceled until further notice.

St. John's Council Meeting via Phone Conference at 7pm on June 8, 2020

Members present: Pastor Matt, Jerry Crites, Brenda Morrison, Anne Moore, Michael Gottlieb, Drew Catrow, Linda Payne, Rick Losh, Mike Noll, Shane Wagoner, Bess Day (treasurer)

Members absent: Jane Kelley, Trey Vorhees, Diane Shewbridge

Jerry opened the meeting with prayer.

Minutes: Minutes of June 8, 2020 were reviewed and approved.

Treasurer's report: Bess will email the financials to council members when completed.

Pastor's report: Work continues on in-person worship, job descriptions for ushers have been written, the sound system equipment is ready (the church has its own and won't need to borrow). Pastor showed signs requiring masks, social distancing, no physical contact, and Welcome. If sick PLEASE stay home. A discussion was had on how to serve communion but no plan was finalized. Pastor advised council that the Director Of the Mustard Seed School program resigned effective July 6, 2020. The Mustard Seed board met and appointed Krystal Avey as interim director. A community meeting was held and many issues were discussed, particularly lack of or mis-communication. Pastor encouraged council to think about ideas for later year services, ie: Reformation Sunday and Christmas. Pastor will be at education August 3 - 5 and vacation August 6 - 16. Jerry will notify supply pastors if outside services cancelled due to heat or weather.

Unfinished business: Continuing to work toward in-person worship July 26, 2020, but monitoring cases daily. The committee (Pastor, Jerry, Brenda) will meet Monday July 20 to review. Pastor had a request for a memorial service to be held within the sanctuary. After discussion, Drew moved that there be NO services held within the church. Mike Noll seconded the motion and it was approved by unanimous decision. Security system checks will continue to be paid to Atlantic Security but no forms are to be signed. Mike Noll will continue to search for security companies with cameras. Rick gave an update on parking lot lighting which will need to wait for security camera placement.

New business: The annual church picnic has been *cancelled*. The Mustard Seed report was given in the pastor's report. <u>Council will meet August 17, 2020.</u>

Committee reports:

Christian education: Shane reported a good virtual VBS with 30 enrolled. This may also be a good venue for Sunday School.

Social Ministry: Jerry reported that Friends Feeding Friends continues to do bag sandwich lunches. The backpack program is continuing to receive donations and it may be possible to obtain funds through Thrivent.

Evangelism: No report.

Property: Anne reported that the hotel construction co. manager may submit a bid for needed exterior work. Doug is to get the EXIT signs installed in Luther Hall, and the down-spouting at LH still needs repair.

Mutual Ministry: no report.

Stewardship: Linda request volunteers to usher when in-person worship occurs. Jerry, Drew, and Michael G. volunteered to help when needed.

Pastor adjourned the meeting with prayer at 8pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Morrison

WANT TO KEEP UP BETTER WITH ACTIVITIES AND WORSHIP AT ST. JOHN'S?



Search for **St. John's Lutheran Church, Martinsburg** on
Facebook and like our page.

Visit Our Website

www.stjohnsmartinsburg.org

Sermons posted weekly, information about faith practices, and more information about events happening at the St John's.



Send an email to announcements@stjohnsmartisburg.org to sign up for weekly emails and announcements.



We are going to continue to explore Luther's Small Catechism as we have for the past few months. Luther instructed pastors to teach the Catechism to the entire congregation once a year.

Many have called Luther's Catechism a jewel of the church.

Come and experience its richness!

To participate In Table Talk visit www.facebook.com/stjohnsmartinsburg/live/
The comments will be on and we will respond as we see them. Non-Facebook users can use Zoom & go to https://tinyurl.com/ybvjonjy or call 1-301-715-8592 and enter the Meeting ID 958 6794 4027 and then enter the Password 067348

Worship at Home Resources Recommendations

Even though we cannot gather for worship in-person, that does not mean you cannot worship. These past few months have taught to be a bit more creative in our approach to worship. Here a few great worship resources and devotionals that should help fill the gap.

https://blogs.elca.org/worship/ - Every week, the ELCA produces a worship service that you can do at home. While intended for Sunday morning, you could use this any time during the week. But that is not all that the ELCA Worship blog has to offer! You can sign up to receive a daily Bible Reading in your email, lots of other worship resources that you can't find in your hymnal, and resources relating to our lectionary.

https://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/22879/ Luther-Small-Catechism-App - Download a copy of the Small Catechism and read it on your phone or tablet. The Small Catechism is a great resource for daily devotion. Read one part a day and by the end of the week!

Luther's Small Catechism with African Descent Reflections - This is new addition to the Small Catechisms offered by Augsburg Fortress. Especially in this time of heighten racial tension, this is an excellent resource to hear the power of Luther's theology effect on our African American brothers and sisters. Simply go to augsburgfortresss.org and put the title in the search engine to get yourself a copy today.

https://www.dailylectio.net - The lectionary includes both the readings we have on Sundays and the readings we have during the week. The Daily Lectionary helps us prepare for the Sunday's reading starting Wednesday and after Sunday help us reflect on what we heard on Sunday. If you want to get more into your Bible, using the daily lectionary is a great way to start. dailylectio.net is a great website because you don't have to try to figure out what is the correct reading appointed for the day. They also have an app that you can use and its all FREE!!!

Do you have any great resources that you are using? Let us know on Facebook or send us an email! We would love to share what you have been using during this time of exile because of the COVID19 pandemic.

AUGUST 2020 SERMONS

August 2- A meal where everyone Is happy

August 9- Sink or swim

August 16- Healing Foreigners

August 23- "What did you say, Peter?"

August 30- "Well that didn't last long,

Peter"

Ushers Needed Are you willing to serve?

Covid19 has required the council to implement certain safety precautions to keep everyone as safe as possible while attending worship. One of those safety precautions is utilizing more ushers than normal. By using more ushers, we can ensure that nobody is stuck doing all the work and there will not be much crossover of tasks in the hopes of lower one's person's risk of exposure to the virus.

- 1. Usher in Charge of the Offering and Masks
- 2. Usher to help take names of everyone attending worship
- 3. Usher to hand out Bulletins
- 4. Usher to help seat people
- 5. Usher to bring Chairs out to the Parking Lot
- 6. Usher to clean up chairs and bring them back to Luther Hall
- 7. Usher to bring a power chord and ethernet cable to the Parking lot
- 8. Usher in charge of the Sound System



Each month, we will focus on a different ministry and show different ways that you can support their work. This month we will focus on:

LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY AT WVU

The Lutheran Campus Ministry at WVU is here to serve the students, faculty, staff, and wider West Virginia University community by offering a community and space to encounter God.

ELCA campus ministry is a Lutheran ministry for students, faculty, staff and others on campus, not just a ministry for Lutherans. It provides an ELCA presence at more than 180 state and private colleges and universities with cooperating congregations in campus ministry at an additional 400 campuses nationwide.

Drawing on the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, campus ministry bears witness to God's amazing grace within the context of higher education. Sensitive to the pastoral needs of those on campus and engaged in the intellectual discourse of the university, campus ministry strives to communicate the gospel in fresh ways.

Through worship, study, fellowship and service, members of the academic community taste the fullness of God's grace. As expansive as Christ's love, campus ministry reaches out to all who teach and learn, inviting them to experience the challenge of following Jesus.

PASTOR SETLEY WILL BE LEADING WORSHIP ON AUGUST 9TH. WE THANK PASTOR TONY FOR MAKING THE TREK DOWN TO THE PANHANDLE AND FOR BRING THE WORD OF GOD TO US.



Covid19 has taught us that our mission of preaching the gospel does not stop even while the rest of world stops. Online giving has enabled many to continue to contribute during this time of exile and Isolation.

We thank you for your generosity and continued support. Your gifts given at worship, by mail or online ensure that we can continue In our work of proclaiming the good news. If you are not able to give at this time because of no Income, we understand. Take care of yourself and your family. If you can give, please do so.



Scan the QR Code or visit our website at stjohnsmartinsburg.org and click Online Giving. And Thank You!



2020 Family Retreat Details

Please call Julie at (540) 449-0018 or email julie@carolinefurnace.org if you have questions or would like more information. We look forward to hosting your family this summer!

Caroline Furnace will be open for Family Retreats beginning on July 9. We are grateful that Virginia continues to view outdoor activity as essential, and that we are able to provide outdoor faith, education, and renewal in a safe way. We can host a maximum of 5 family groups (of 10 or less) on property at once; spaces are first come, first served.

- For family groups of 10 or less; 14 days of Health Pre-Screening required for all participants
- Minimum stay is two nights; maximum four nights (3pm Thursday to 11am Monday)
- The Farmhouse and Sukkah Village are optional no-contact retreat spaces.

Farmhouse (\$200-250 per night*)

- *Cost is a flat rate of \$200 per night for 1-6 people, or \$250 for 7-10 people
- Wi-Fi is provided. You can continue to work and study remotely while on retreat.
- You'll have a fully equipped kitchen; only ingredients are needed. Bed linens and towels are provided.

Cabin Village (\$200-250 per night, meals included*)

- *Cost is a flat rate of \$200 per night for 1-6 people, or \$250 for 7-10 people, +\$50 for A/C (Cabin 7 & 8)
- Wi-Fi is provided. You can continue to work and study remotely while on retreat.
- Bathhouse shower times are scheduled by family. Each group
 will have a designated rain space and campfire circle. Up to
 three family groups may stay in the Cabin Village at one time.

Sukkah Village (\$50 per night*)

- *Cost is a flat rate of \$50 per night for 1-6 people, or \$75 for 7-10 people
- You may choose tent camping or RV camping (no RV hookups -regular 110v power available)
- Camping stoves allowed; a fire circle and firewood is also available
- The pavilion and one side of the bathhouse will be open.

Meals (+\$20-35 per meal, per family)

- For Farmhouse and Sukkah Village groups: add \$20 per breakfast or lunch, \$25 per dinner for up to 6 people; add an additional \$10 per meal for 7-10 people
- Breakfast 8:00am, Lunch 12:30pm, Dinner 5:30pm
- Meals are provided by outdoor take-out or by delivery to your cabin porch/lodging space.
- Bag lunches are available if you are traveling off-site.

Staff-led Activities (+\$50 per day / for two activities)

- You may choose from 1 to 3 days of staff-led activities. Plan for 1 to 1.5 hours per activity.
- At least one adult must participate in each staff-activity and is expected to provide supervision.
- 6+ feet of distancing is required. If this isn't realistic (first aid), our staff will wear a mask/gloves.
- Pick Two (/day): Archery, Canoeing, Creekwalking, CDC/low ropes, Fishing, History Hike, Swimming

*If this is cost prohibitive for you but your family would still like to come on retreat, please contact us. We want to do everything we can to support you during this time.

Learn more by visiting: https://www.carolinefurnace.org/summer-schedule and scroll down to the link that says

Learn more about Family Retreats

A MEESAGE FROM THE COUNCIL

Fellow Members,

At our Council meeting on July, we discussed the rising cases of Covid19 in our area and the prospects of holding outdoor worship this week. At this time, the Council feels that it is best to wait a few more weeks and reevaluate the numbers at our August 17th Council meeting. Hopefully, things will look better and we can go ahead with in-person worship on the following Sunday (August 23). This was not an easy decision and we know the desire to get together in-person as a congregation is important. It is an important concern for us as well.

The good news is this: We will continue to livestream worship each week using Facebook Live and the phone. The other piece of good news is that we are ready to go the moment it is safe to return. We have all the tools, the people, the supplies, and the plan in place to make in-person worship happen at a moment's notice. This time apart has been difficult. When we do return, many of us will realize that some of our members have entered the great Church Triumphant. Others might still not feel ready to return because they are part of the vulnerable population. There are some in our family who we have lost along the way because of our decision to delay our return to inperson. And yes, there will be some in our family who might never return because they no longer feel that the institutional church is necessary in their life. Their absence will cause many of us to be upset, loose heart and maybe even not want to return to church as well. However, let us not forget the words from our Savior in Matthew 16:

And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.'

The gates of Hades, empires, wars, and even this virus will not shake foundations of Christ's church. There is a hunger and thirst for the gospel of Jesus Christ in our world and community and we, as fellow members of the body of Christ, are called to testify and proclaim this good news. Please continue to share our online worship with your family and friends.

Continue to do the important work of checking in on your neighbors, friends, and fellow members of the body of Christ and let them know that we have not shutdown our ministry, but are still working hard to fulfill our mission of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ.

Blessings and Love,

The Council of St. John's Lutheran Church

MILESTONES IN AUGUST

<u>Birthdays</u>

- I Traci HardenRick Losh
- 2 Nathan Cosner Logan Murphy Emily Bernazzoli
- 4 Jamie Ferenchick
- 5 Eryn Fleming
- 6 Amy Loomis
- 8 Jessica Horner
- 10 Joyce Roth
- 11 Walker Hutzler
- 12 Barry Provard Sarah Vogel
- 13 Barbara Arndt
- 14 Rodney White
- 15 Annette Mann
- 19 Suzanne Boslau Allison Janney
- 21 Betty Lou Boynton
- Nona PayneTyler Vogel
- 28 Danine Rydland
- 29 Matthew Edwards Ron Kreiensieck
- 30 Lily Jackson
- 31 Daniel Coffinberger Debbie Wilson

Anniversaries

- 5 Cheryl and Rick Losh
- 10 Robin and Edward Robinson
- 14 Bernice and Ralph Baker
 Tonya and Jon Fleming
 Arlene and Peter Leitzke
 Linda and Jim Riley
- 24 Hope and Steve Crites

We would love to include all of our church families special dates:

Just give us a call:

304-263-9291

Drop us an e-mail:

churchoffice@stjohnsmartinsburg.org or put them in the offering plate.

A FEW CEMETERY MOWERS NEEDED

The season has started and will go into the Fall for the up-keep of the Old Lutheran - Reformed Cemetery located across from Brown Funeral Home.

We are in great need of "trimmers", but you will need to bring your own equipment - trimmers, pruners, rakes, etc.

Once we get the winter left-overs cleared away, maintenance is much easier and less often.

We welcome any amount of time and help you can spare.

For more information contact Pat Murphy (304-263-0586).



What shall I say that has not already been said? I feel like every month, my letter to you all is filled with some kind of encouragement around the coronavirus. I feel like I say the same thing each month. I was recently at a board meeting for Caroline Furnace (when I say I was at the board meeting, I attended it

virtually) and we were going over the numbers and prospects for the future. It is a very scary time for most camps in North America. For years, Caroline Furnace has relied very heavily on in-person, summer camps for a large part of our revenue and our work as a camp is focused on making summer camp happen. Now, in-person summer camp has been canceled for 2020 and we are not sure what next summer will hold. We have made the best possible contingency plans to try to keep the camp afloat, but will they be enough? I asked during the discussion, "What did camps do in 1918 during the Spanish flu?" People on the board laughed and I will admit, my question was part sarcastic but I was also very serious.

In 1918, camps were not nearly as numerous and didn't carry the debt that many camps are carrying today. Camps didn't have year round staff or services. Camps didn't have indoor plumbing or cabins that required year-round maintenance. Summer camps were very different, but the reality is that after 1918, many of these camps closed. But did summer camps go away after 1918? No. We still have summer camps today—in fact, there are more summer camp programs than ever before. However, many camps didn't make it and for many today, the loss of these camps has long been forgotten because it happened before many of us were born. But that doesn't mean the

pain from the loss of these camps should be ignored. We need to learn how to deal with this loss and adapt for the future.

What I am trying to say is this: the church and its many ministries has survived wars, famine, tyrannical rulers, tyrannical governments, and even pandemics. We are going to come out of this...eventually. However, our world and our church will look very different after this pandemic. I know many are anxious to return to in-person worship because you fear we might lose people to other churches who have returned. That is a possibility and probably is the reality at this point. Losing a member of our community, our family, hurts and maybe you feel like we need to do everything within our powers to keep them present. But at what cost are we willing to make? How are we going to manage the risk?

What I have admired about the council is that none of these members ever thought they would be making life and death decisions. They accepted the nomination with the idea that they would be creating some new policies, proposing budgets, and making decisions about who can use the building. Now they are trying to decide if the risk of in-person worship in an older congregation is worth it?

Do not get me wrong, I want to come back to in-person worship. In-person worship is what I was trained to do and have done since I was a child. This past Sunday, even after I ran all kinds of checks on the livestream before we started worship, there was a loss of audio and eventually we lost the video feed. It required me restarting the program which meant a disruption during online worship. I was so angry that I had to walk out of the sanctuary. I am tired of worshipping this way. I long to hear the voices of others ring out in praise to God, but that comes with a cost and risk. Managing those risks and costs has to be done. Maybe you feel like online worship is not "real worship." You might be right, but may I suggest that before we go and make that case, let us remember what is the purpose of the church?

Article 8 of the Augsburg Confession titled, What is the Church?, defines church as:

•the assembly of saints and those who truly believe &

•the sacraments even when they are administered by evil people. And this is the key part of the article for us today: We believe that "both the sacraments and the Word are efficacious because of the ordinance and command of Christ, even when offered by evil people." The church is the place where the gospel is preach, the sacraments are administered rightly (I know this time away from sacraments have been hard, but to abuse and misuse the sacraments is far worse than to be away from them) and the gathering of the saints. The proclamation of the gospel is equal to that of the sacraments. Gathering online might not feel like church, but in many ways is no different from our shut-ins sharing in worship via a cassette tape, a dvd or even over the phone. If it is okay for shut-ins to worship this way, why

not the whole church? The gospel is still proclaimed and provides the same benefit as hearing it in-person. There are many new faith communities in the Lutheran Church that started by worshipping online long before we ever heard of Covid19. Does this mean gathering online is better than in-person? Are there no benefits to gathering in-person? Of course there is and these benefits are important. Being with one another, seeing one another, and hearing the voice of people lifting up praise and worship to God are all powerful and important. I miss these things and desperately want to experience, and we are doing everything we can to manage the risks involved to hold in-person worship. We just need a little more time and I hope you can give us a little more time.

I have spent my entire life attending worship in-person on Sundays. I cannot remember too many Sundays growing up where I was not in a church on Sunday. This time apart has been difficult. The same things you have been feeling have also been felt by myself. This has been no picnic for me and when I hear that some of you are thinking about leaving the church, it breaks my heart. We are a family and families stick together through hard times. Church is not a business. A business caters to the needs of each of its customers. We are a church and we proclaim the gospel. Your gifts given to you by the Holy Spirit make our work possible and if you leave, it is like cutting off a finger, a hand, or a foot. Life is still possible, but it gets very, very hard. We have seen this happen over the years after a beloved member has died and entered the church triumphant. Their death makes doing our mission all that more harder. I know that some of you are upset, I only ask that you be patient. This will not last forever.

So, God willing, we will try to worship together on August 23rd in our parking lot. Yes, it will be weird. Yes, you might not like it. But none of that matters. What matters is that the saints will gather, the sacraments will be administered, and the gospel will be proclaimed through the mouths of sinners. How amazing that God gives us this good news to be proclaimed by a sinner like you and me.

Rosh / Ash

In Christ,



St. John's Lutheran Church 101 W. Martin Street Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401

Return Service Requested