

Wednesday, March 25, 2020

Dear saints of St. John, Palmer:

We will offer **OUTDOOR CHURCH SERVICE SUNDAY AT 1PM** in compliance with all government and CDC regulations! May God bless this effort with fair weather. If the weather does not cooperate, we will postpone to another time. Here is what you need to know:

- *Follow all social distancing measures* as an act of love toward your neighbor. Keep at least six feet between households. With our property, you should be able to spread out easily. Remind children that this is a worship service and not a time for them to mingle with their friends, as much as they want to.
- *If you have symptoms, stay home*. If you feel it is not safe for you to leave your house, stay home. We should not pressure or judge one another in these times but walk in love and understanding.
- *Bring your own seating if you want to sit* (e.g., lawn chairs, blankets). If you prefer, you can even stay in your car and just crack the windows.
- At the end of the preaching service (~30 min.), Holy Communion will be offered to those who want as follows:
 - You will not need to touch any doors, people, or surfaces.
 - Communicants will be admitted *by household* through the opened main front door, where an elder will place sanitizer in your hands.
 - Between each household, pastor will also sanitize his hands with 95% alcohol, which is well beyond even ordinary hand sanitizer.
 - Pastor will drop the body of Christ into each communicant's hands and place an individual cup of Christ's blood on the altar rail in front of each communicant to be consumed.
 - Households will exit the sanctuary through the side door and out the building. Again, you will not need to touch, open, or close any doors.
 - An elder will wipe and sanitize the altar rail between each household.

Many of you have contacted us with questions about the best way to continue your financial support while services are disrupted. Of course, if you make it to a service, you can leave your offering in the plate.

One way to contribute if you cannot make it to church is to mail a check to the church at 304 National Rd., Palmer, KS 66962. You can also use your bank's bill pay service. This can be set up automatically so that you don't even have to think about it. The bank just needs the name and address of the church and the amount you wish to give. Most banks offer this as a free service, and the church pays no fees.

Online giving is also possible via Thrivent. The church pays no fees. You do not even need to have a Thrivent account. For a limited time, Thrivent will be matching gifts. This applies both to St. John Congregation and Linn Lutheran School. You can read about the matching program here: bit.ly/3bdDbBT

Direct link to St. John's online giving page: tinyurl.com/tf35vhq (click "MAKE PERSONAL DONATION").

For many of us, this Lent doesn't feel like Lent as we aren't able to gather as easily or as frequently for the Sacrament or to hear God's Word together. We can listen online and participate in that way, but it

isn't the same. We hope that by offering hyper-sanitized church services we can still mutually encourage and strengthen one another in Word and Sacrament during these days.

Finally, today is the feast of the Annunciation of Our Lord, when we recall the Good News the angel spoke to Mary about the Savior conceived in her womb. In a bad-news world, you can rejoice with Mary that you have a good-news God. He will bring you from this valley of sorrows to Himself in heaven through Christ who took up the sin, sickness, and death we all deserved.

May the Lord be merciful to you and strengthen your faith.

Peace,

Pastor Hayes and the Board of Elders