

**Statement to Members and Friends of**  
*Evangelical Lutheran Church of Durham*  
**Regarding A Return to In-Person/Indoor Worship at our Church Building**

Target Date for Return: Sunday, September 13 at 10:30 AM

We have been guided in our planning as a Church Council and as a Safety Coordination Team by the following principles:

- 1) That our first priority is for the safety of our worshiping community, families, and people in the community we may see. In other words: **We will love our neighbors as we love ourselves!**
- 2) That we will be guided by the requirements or recommendations of state officials and medical/health experts.

**In other words, as a church community, we will do everything we can to protect and save lives. Our way forward has been guided by faithfulness to the signs of the times, then conservatively crafting an appropriate response. We hope all of you will appreciate our carefulness.**

- - - What to Expect When You Arrive for Worship at our Building

As we return, here are some things to keep in mind ...

Whether to come to in-person worship or not -

- **If you are not feeling well** - have a fever or any other symptoms of illness - **do not come!**
- You should not feel pressured to return! If you are over 65, have a compromised immune system, have been exposed to COVID-19, or have other underlying conditions that may make you more vulnerable, you may choose not to come for in-person worship. That decision is entirely up to you, we will continue with our online 10:30 AM Facebook Live Sunday Worship Broadcast every week, even when we have in-person worship.

What to expect when you return -

- Please socially distance in the parking lot, staying at least 6 feet away from other individuals and family units.
- A mask will be required. If for some reason you forget or don't have a mask, we will provide one for you to wear to worship.
- Seating will be designated according to social distancing guidelines, with at least six feet in front, behind, and on either side of you.

- Volunteers from the church will direct you inside and to your seat. One side of the outer ramp will be for entrance only, the other for exit. Folks will be seated first at the front of the sanctuary, gradually working back to the rear. We will use every pew, but in a way that still is consistent with social distancing. You will be ushered out after worship, with the back pews leaving first and the front pews leaving last.
- There will be no or very limited touching of objects or people within the sanctuary. A table in the narthex will hold non-reusable bulletins for you to pick up in a sanitized container. There will be another container for your offering, as well as hand sanitizer, wipes, disinfectant spray, and paper towels. We will not be using hymnals.
- There will be no handshakes or other touching, including at the Sharing of the Peace.
- There will be NO SINGING, either by the Congregation or the Choir. Our Organist/Choir Director will play for us and also organize soloists to sing special music or the hymns.
- The length of worship will be shorter than what we're used to, about 30-45 minutes. For the foreseeable future there will be no Coffee Hours or other fellowship events. You are encouraged to exit the building when directed, which will be immediately after the Postlude.

#### Some other words about the new worship service

- We expect that we will be able to seat up to 60 worshipers following strict social distance guidelines. You will be seated with your entire immediate family, with a distance of 6 feet between your family and other worshipers.
- There will be online sign-up for weekly worship attendance to ensure that we don't exceed 60 worshipers. An email from the Church Council will explain the sign-up procedure. If you don't have or use the Internet, please notify the church office or a friend who can sign you up online of your intent to attend worship each week.
- We will be keeping track of who attends worship each week for contact tracing purposes should we need it.
- Our custodian will be cleaning and disinfecting our worship space every week.
- Please note that Communion, Baptism, Confirmation, and other special services are not planned for September. We are carefully investigating how we can conduct such worship services safely.
- **If infection statistics spike in Pennsylvania, especially in Bucks County, we will have to return to online Facebook Live worship only.**

For six months now the Church of Jesus Christ has been challenged by the coronavirus pandemic. We have been slowly living into a new normal - continuing to be a faithful church, but in new ways. It will be good to be with each other inside our beautiful church building, even if in a different way.

Everybody please stay safe!!!