



UNITED PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL:

Light of Christ
St. John's Windish
St. Peter's

Dear Members and Friends,

At the joint congregational council meeting between the UPG Parish and St. John's Windish Lutheran Church, held on Tuesday, April 20, 2021, it was decided that we will attempt to return to indoor, in person worship beginning on Sunday, May 02, 2021.

As we did in October 2020, we will again be following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) so that we do not put anyone at risk. We are again asking everyone for their support and flexibility.

As leaders of our congregations, we are doing our best to open our buildings and keep everyone safe. We know that we cannot meet everyone's needs and desires at this time. Be patient with us and with each other. Be flexible and accepting as we work together. Please keep our leaders and staff in your prayers as we work together to return to some semblance of what we knew as normal.

The primary concern of our leadership is, and always will be, to provide meaningful worship celebrations that will not compromise the health and safety of our sisters and brothers in Christ.

GUIDELINES WE WILL FOLLOW:

Everyone attending worship must wear a properly fitting face mask.

Rational: As of this writing COVID-19 is still considered to be a highly contagious respiratory disease. The primary mode of transmission is by aerosolized particles and droplets that are created when we sing, shout, play a woodwind or brass instrument, and just plain speak.

Please note: Not all face masks afford proper protection. Gator face masks or single ply face masks have been proven to increase risk factors to the public by breaking droplets down into aerosolized particles. Please adorn yourself with at least a two (2)-ply face mask for worship. Face masks will be available for anyone who may need one.

You will be invited to remove your mask for the consumption of Holy Communion.

There will be no singing.

Rational: Same as above.

People in worship must maintain a physical distance of six (6) feet, approximately two (2) arm lengths, between persons or groups of people who do not live in the same household. (CDC: Guidance for Organizing Events and Gatherings, March 08, 2021)

Rational: Aerosolized breath particles, during normal speech, have been proven by engineering studies to travel approximately that distance. Physical distancing measures are based primarily on historical studies of other contagious diseases, as well as what is currently known about the behavior of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

As it pertains to Sunday School

There is revised guidance from the CDC (Operational Strategies for K-12 Schools, March 19, 2021) as it concerns school environments. When researching the spread of COVID-19 among children aged 5-17 it has been shown that less than 10% of total cases fall in this age group. Additionally, the majority of children in this age group who do contract COVID-19 are more frequently asymptomatic or suffer mild symptoms of the disease. (This may be due, in part, to biologic mechanisms for decreased susceptibility related to decreased ACE2 receptors in the respiratory system and age-related differences in the immunologic response to the SARS-CoV-2 virus.) Based upon current data, in person learning has NOT been associated with substantial community spread. Emerging evidence shows that a physical distance of three (3) feet is sufficient when coupled with the mitigation measures of face masks, limiting student congregation at lockers/cafeterias/hallways, and improvement of air filtration/exchange/circulation mechanisms.

There will be no use of ceiling fans or seating in the balcony.

Rational: The purpose of ceiling fans is to circulate the air, providing the sense of cooling in the summer & circulating warm air to the floor in winter. Both of these functions will also serve to force any viral particles in the air to the level of people sitting in the pews, thereby increasing the risk for possible transmission of COVID-19.

In any season, colder air is heavier than warm air. Therefore, warm air rising into a balcony level increases the risk for possible transmission of COVID-19.

(Dr. Alton D. Romig, PhD Materials Science & Engineering; Executive Officer, National Academy of Engineering)

Open windows

Rational: Opening windows, to the extent possible, will serve to facilitate the exchange of fresh outside air into the worship space.

No coffee corners

Rational: As stated above, COVID-19 remains a highly transmissible respiratory virus. Gathering in enclosed spaces, without face masks (as occurs when eating or drinking), continues to be one of the seminal events resulting in the transmission of this disease.

Now is not the time for us to let our guard down. While we are moving in the direction of herd immunity, we are not “there” yet. As of Friday, April 23, 2021, the CDC national COVID-19 tracking information shows both Lehigh (8.4%) and Northampton (8.9%) counties to be in the level of a HIGH rate of transmission. It also shows both counties to have 27% of their populations at the fully vaccinated level. The United States, as a whole, is approximately 25% fully vaccinated.

Here it would do us well to remember that the more contagious a disease is (and we know COVID-19 is HIGHLY contagious!) the greater the proportion of the population that needs to be immune is. (Mayo Clinic) The estimate of herd immunity currently being floated for COVID-19 is 90%. We are still a long way from there. The more measures we can utilize to decrease the spread of this disease the safer we will all be.

Return to In Person Worship

The Joint Congregational Councils have voted to re-open our buildings for worship, Sunday School, and other church meetings and activities. Outside groups utilizing our buildings will be addressed at the May 18th meeting of the joint councils. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Suzanne or any of the Congregational Presidents.

We will continue to follow all CDC recommended precautions, masks must be worn, social distancing between nonfamily groups and no singing. Please see above from Our Parish Nurse, Donna Musselman.

Worship will be held virtually on Saturday’s beginning at 4:45 pm and in person at 11 am rotating the three congregational buildings. After Sunday School ends for the academic year, the worship schedule may be changed, and updates will be available on the daily emails and Until We Meet Again.

Sunday School will be held from 9:30 am to 10:30 am beginning May 2nd through June 6th at the Light of Christ campus.

Saturday, May 1st worship recorded at Light of Christ and available on the UPG Facebook page at 4:45 pm

Sunday, May 2nd, in person worship at Light of Christ at 11 am with Holy Communion

Saturday, May 8th livestream worship via UPG Facebook page at 4:45 pm from St. John’s Windish

Sunday, May 9th in person worship at St. John's Windish at 11 am with Holy Communion

Saturday, May 15th livestream worship via UPG Facebook page at 4:45 pm from St. Peter's

Sunday, May 16th in person worship at St. Peter's at 11 am with Holy Communion

Saturday, May 22nd worship recorded at Light of Christ and available on the UPG Facebook page at 4:45 pm

Sunday, May 23rd in person worship at Light of Christ at 11 am with Holy Communion

Saturday, May 29th livestream worship via UPG Facebook page at 4:45 pm from St. John's Windish

Sunday, May 30th in person worship at St. John's Windish at 11 am with Holy Communion

Saturday, June 5th livestream worship via UPG Facebook page at 4:45 from St. Peter's

Sunday, June 6 in person worship at St. Peter's at 11 am with Holy Communion

Looking forward to seeing your smiling eyes above your masks. Please be sure to follow your heart, keep yourself safe and return in person to worship when you feel comfortable doing so.

In Peace,

Pastor Suzanne