



Christ the King Lutheran Church

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Pastor Caroline Satre

Pastor Brad Davick

You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my soul may praise you and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever."

Psalm 30:11-12

Dear Christ the King Community,

Psalm 30, often read during the season of Easter, speaks of a God who regularly turns "mourning into dancing," darkness into light, death into life. This year, we will witness this movement not only in the coming of spring, but also in the return to indoor worship.

The Church Council has decided to **resume indoor worship on May 2 — gradually, and with many precautions still in place.** In a March report from the Ecumenical Consultation on Protocols for Worship, Fellowship, and Sacraments, of which the ELCA has been a key member, three statistical thresholds were recommended be met prior to restarting indoor worship:

- Less than 5% positivity rate of people receiving COVID-19 tests (St. Joseph County currently: 3.26%)
- Rate of new cases per day less than 10 in 100,000 (St. Joseph County currently: 37)
- ICU beds filled to less than 70% capacity (our region currently: 63%)

While our area currently only meets two of the above statistical thresholds, there are other encouraging signs — while case numbers have not fallen dramatically, the death rate and hospitalization rate has. More than 36% of St. Joseph County residents age 16 and older have had at least one dose of a vaccine, and 27% are fully vaccinated — including, just recently, both of our pastors.

Given these circumstances, we will continue to follow the guidance of scientists in order to ensure the health and safety of our members and the wider community. The Council re-evaluates data and policies at two meetings every month, but for now, the following policies will be in effect:

- One indoor worship service will be held at 11:15 a.m. The 9:30 a.m. drive-in service will continue for now; Worship on the Web (WOW) will continue for the foreseeable future (see page 2 for additional information on WOW). Additional services will be added or modified as necessary.
- Masks will be mandatory inside for anyone ages 2 and up, **regardless of vaccination status.** Ctk will continue to follow scientific guidance indicating masking is among the best ways to reduce spread of the virus.

- Social distancing between individuals or family units will be in effect in the sanctuary. Alternating pews will be roped off, but worshippers are otherwise welcome to choose their seat.
- There will be no congregational singing indoors, as that remains one of the highest-risk activities for transmitting the coronavirus. Instrumental music and prerecorded or individual singing will continue to be used until further notice. Worship folders and an offering plate will be available at the entrance to the sanctuary.
- Communion will be offered in the form of prepackaged wafers and grape juice. Ushers will dismiss worshippers row by row starting with the front. Please walk up the center aisle, receive communion from one of the pastors, then return to your seat to take your mask off to eat and drink.
- Socializing before and after the service is encouraged — but should be done outside, either under the portico or in the parking lot. Please do not linger in the narthex. Ushers will dismiss worshippers row by row at the conclusion of the service, and the pastors will be waiting outside to greet you. Recycle your worship folders and dispose of communion supplies in the proper bins as you exit the sanctuary.

One of the true benefits of this most difficult of years has been Christ the King fully entering the digital age, and the countless ways that has benefited us. Offering Worship on the Web weekly has allowed us to reach those quarantined at home and made our services available to our homebound members, snowbirds, former members living around the country or around the world, members who work on the weekends, and friends and family of members who have now made our services part of their weekly routine.

Thus, WOW will continue. The Council has made significant investments in improving our audio and video capabilities in the sanctuary, and beginning this summer, our 11:15 a.m. Sunday worship will be livestreamed and made available on demand so anyone can watch in the week following that service.

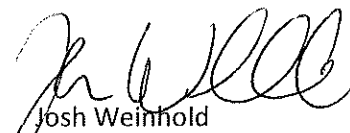
Finally, we know many of you are excited about returning to indoor worship. We are, too. But weekly services don't happen on their own — it requires dedicated teams of volunteers every week. So, **if you're eager to be back in the sanctuary, we encourage you to fill out our online form at ctkluth.com/volunteer or contact the church office and let us know how you can help.** We need ushers, greeters, readers, audio and video assistants (now more than ever), drive-in parking lot attendants, and more to help make this all happen. Please consider "loving and serving the world" in this way.

However you choose to worship in the coming weeks — be it in the sanctuary, online, or in the back parking lot, may your soul praise God and not be silent. Along with the psalmist, let us give thanks to God forever.

In Christ,



Caroline Satre
Senior Pastor



Josh Weinhold
Council President