

Welcome to

DOWNERS GROVE, IL



GOOD SHEPHERD

Evangelical Lutheran Church and Academy

RESUMING ON-CAMPUS WORSHIP

*I rejoiced with those who said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the Lord!”*

Psalm 122:1

Dear Friends,

The words of Psalm 122 above were spoken by travelers as they made their way to the temple in Jerusalem. They **REJOICED** as they went to the house of the Lord!

We also **REJOICE** that we are able to offer opportunities for on-campus worship at Good Shepherd beginning the weekend of June 20-21. We have been waiting for months to gather in-person with our church family around the Word and Sacraments.

It is important to note that on-campus worship will be different and that not everyone should return to campus immediately. Gathering at church presents a unique risk compared to going out in public to run errands. While running errands, we are typically on the move and not interacting with any one person for more than a few moments. In worship, however, we spend extended time interacting in the same place with the same people. This greatly increases the risk of infection for everyone. For this reason, worship at first will be different than what we are accustomed to. While we rightly **REJOICE** in being able to go to the house of the Lord, the services will be noticeably shorter and limited.

Please remember that the COVID-19 virus is not gone. The last thing we want to do as a church is to hasten the spread of the virus. While we trust in the Lord to take care of us, we also do not want to put the Lord to the test. For this reason, we ask that you please read carefully the instructions and information provided by our leadership in this document. We thank you for your understanding, patience, and support during these unusual times.

Perfect love drives out all fear 1 John 4:2

WORSHIP INFORMATION

- **Good Shepherd's regular worship schedule will resume June 20:**
Saturday 5:30 pm - Sunday 8:00 am, 10:30 am.
- **Attendance in each worship service will be limited to 40.**
This number is 25% of our sanctuary's capacity and is established with respect to current health guidelines. Limiting attendance will allow us to more easily apply appropriate social distancing measures.
- **Those attending on-campus worship are required to pre-register each week they attend.**
Register online (www.gsdg.org) or by calling the church office at 630-852-1519.
- **For the sake of the most vulnerable, we ask you to wear a mask.**
The pastor and ushers who greet in the lobby will be wearing masks, as the CDC strongly recommends masks for anyone over age 3, and this will help make many more feel comfortable in the worship space. When Pastor leads worship he will not wear a mask due to appropriate social distancing while at the altar.
- **Online worship will continue.**
Our streaming worship option will continue both now and after all gathering restrictions have been lifted.
- **There will be less congregational singing.**
The deep breathing required to sing presents a unique risk for spreading germs, which is why we will not provide many opportunities for the congregation to sing during worship at first. In general, this is going to look different. It is going to feel different. We simply will not be able to replicate everything we previously did. Not at first. Churches all over the world are learning new ways to operate during this time. Thank you for your understanding as we strive to serve one another in love.
- **Limited-contact Holy Communion will be offered.**
Individual cups containing wafers and individual cups containing wine will be served; there will be no "common cup." After the distribution, communicants will be invited to return to their seats via the side aisles. Trash receptacles will be set up for the communicants to dispose of their cups.

- **We will continue to offer “small group communion.”**

For those who are not able or not comfortable with joining us in worship to receive the Sacrament on June 20-21, three sessions of small group communion will be offered on the afternoon of Saturday, June 20. These sessions will accommodate up to 20 people per session. Please visit our website (www.gsdg.org) to view time slots for this small group communion distribution. If you need assistance in signing up for a slot, please contact the church office at 630-852-1519.

- **Temperature screening will be in place**

As we have done for small group communion, an usher will check the temperature of each worshipper at the door before they enter the building. Those who have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher will be asked to refrain from entering the building.

CLEANLINESS & SOCIAL DISTANCING

- **The worship space will be altered to encourage appropriate social distancing.**

Every other pew will be unavailable for use. Worshippers are encouraged to spread out in the sanctuary as much as possible. Families who live in the same household may sit right next to one another.

Hymnals, Bibles, friendship registers, and pens will be removed from the pews.

Offering plates will not be passed. Offerings may be given online or deposited in the offering plate at the back of the worship space.

- **Practice social distancing throughout your time on campus.**

While we are all eager to shake hands or give a hug, especially since we haven't seen each other in a while, please go immediately to a pew in the sanctuary as you enter church. Pastor will greet you in the lobby, though he will not be shaking hands. At the conclusion of each service, Pastor Bergemann will invite one aisle at a time to exit. An usher will hold the exit doors open. If you wish to visit after church, please do so outside the building. When the sanctuary is empty, Pastor Bergemann will go outside to greet those who remain.

- **High-contact surfaces (like pews and door handles) will be disinfected after every service.**

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GENERAL ENCOURAGEMENTS

- **Make worship decisions according to your own comfort level while also respecting the decisions of all others.**

As Scripture says, “Love always trusts.” (1 Corinthians 13:7) Situations in which there are a great number of conflicting perspectives gives us a unique opportunity to put this command into practice and highlight the beauty of the Christian faith.

- **Individuals at high risk should strongly consider worshipping from home for now.**

Those who are age 65 or older, have chronic lung diseases such as COPD or asthma, serious heart conditions, diabetes, obesity, kidney disease, and/or are immune-compromised should seriously consider continuing to worship from home. Worship will continue to be offered online and Pastor Bergemann is willing to make private visits.

- **Individuals feeling sick should worship from home.**

Please regularly self-screen at home. If anyone in the household unit has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher, shortness of breath, sore throat, cough, diarrhea, headache, or has lost their sense of taste or smell, the whole family unit should stay home.

- **Those who are unable or uncomfortable attending on-campus worship are welcome to stay home and worship online with no guilt or stigma.**

We are Christian friends who love, trust, defend, protect, and look out for one another. Staying home if you are “at-risk” is a powerful way to demonstrate love for others right now. Staying at home if you are uncomfortable coming back to campus at this time is a decision that will be fully supported.

- **Please stay tuned for updates in the weeks to come.**

The Worship Committee and church leadership will continue to monitor the latest health guidelines and developments. They will review and adjust practices to our worship as necessary. They will share any updates in a timely manner through weekly email communication, just as they have done each week for the previous 14 weeks.

- **Pray and Rejoice!**

Pray that God blesses our in-person worship and streaming worship, that all may be kept safe in His care, that our community may heal and recover, and that we continue on the path to the day when we may all gather together - restriction and pandemic free - again! And finally . . . **REJOICE!**

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