



Ascension Ev. Lutheran Church

521 West 23rd Avenue
Mitchell, SD. 57301

Pastor David D. Reichel

dreichel@mitchelltelecom.net 605-996-9123



May 22, 2020

Dear Member(s) of Ascension,

I greeting you today in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who not only rose mightily and victoriously from the grave on Easter— proving that He did indeed make complete payment and satisfaction to His heavenly Father for all of our sins; but who also ascended to His Father’s right hand— the position of power and authority which is rightly His as King and Ruler over all creation, and also now as Redeemer and Savior of all! What a comfort and blessing it is to know and trust in The One who now lives and rules over all things for our good (Romans 8:28), having conquered sin, death, and hell for us! *“This IS the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!”* (Psalm 118:24)!

At our Church Council meeting last night (Thursday evening), the Council decided to continue to move ahead in our return to regular worship services here at Ascension. As of this Sunday, May 24, we will hold our Morning Worship Service *inside* our church building! But there are some important changes that we will need everyone to be aware of, as we take this step forward during this pandemic. They are:

- Please seek diligently to maintain the CDC recommended “6-foot social distancing” between you and those around you at all times!
- If you are sick, please do not come to church! Even if it’s “only a cold” or “only the sniffles”— for the health and well-being of yourself and your fellow members, please stay home and get well again first! I can bring you a CD recording of the Worship Service later in the week so you can listen to it at home while you’re recovering! Just let me know if you would like one.
- If you would feel more comfortable, you are welcome to remain in your car, to “parking-lot-participate” in our Worship Service on Sunday! We are going to make every effort to again offer the service via the **FM 102.1** channel that we’ve been using for the past few Sundays, so that you can still hear the service on your car radio. This is perfectly fine. There is nothing wrong with that; we all understand very well. Not everyone is going to be able to (due to sensitive job requirements), or comfortable with (because of personal preference and caution) coming inside the church building yet. But we want *everyone* to be able to worship and hear God’s precious Word of life and salvation together with us this Sunday— in one way or the other!
- We will have hand sanitizer bottles, sanitizing wipes, and face masks available for everyone as you enter the church building. *Please make use of them* for yourself and your family, and for the health and safety of others. As you keep hearing, “We’re all in this together!” How much more true is that for us as members of the family of God here at Ascension!
- You may pick up a bulletin/worship folder in the entryway yourself, on your way into church (the usher will *not* hand it to you!). As you enter the sanctuary, please find your pew and sit *ONLY* on the maroon pew cushions! They have been slightly re-arranged to encourage greater “distancing” during the worship service. Please leave them where they are— *don’t* move them closer to the one in front of or behind you!

- If you would prefer and feel more comfortable, you may sit at one of the tables in the fellowship area, as long as you are able to maintain a “6-foot-social-distance” between you and those around you! Couples or families are welcome to sit together (whether in the sanctuary or in the fellowship area); others are asked to maintain that “social-distance” between you and your neighbor!
- For the Worship Service itself: we will *not* be using the hymnals in the pews, but will again have the hymns, psalm, and liturgy printed out and included with the Sunday bulletin as we’ve become accustomed to using with the “parking-lot” worship service! The offering will be received either *before* or *after* the service, by way of “the bucket” that will be in the entryway (instead of out on the parking lot, as on previous Sundays!).
- Unfortunately, we *won’t* be shaking hands after the Worship Service; we *won’t* be having any “treats” from the kitchen in the fellowship area; we *won’t* be offering any hugs, either! Instead, we recommend that everyone exit the sanctuary through the *side* doors at the back of church, directly to the entryway and then to outside. Conversation with and greetings to one another can then be made *outside*, where there will be less likelihood of possible transmission of any viruses!
- The newest issue of the daily devotions booklet, *Meditations*, will be available for you to pick up in the entryway, either as you enter or leave church. It begins next Sunday, May 30.

At all times, we respectfully request that you take these guidelines/recommendations seriously, lovingly, and respectfully of others around you. This virus/disease is not a joke, not a hoax, nor pretends! It is serious, and these precautions need to be respected and taken seriously by all of us. We do not want to do anything that might transmit the virus to someone else, or endanger their health or welfare in any way. All of us can do these simple things to lessen the chance of infection, and still enjoy gathering together in God’s House to worship Him and hear His precious, saving Gospel. *That*, above all else, is the greatest, most important, and most loving treasure we have and want to share with others— not an unhealthy, potentially dangerous virus!!

If you can think of anything else that we should or could be doing, that we haven’t thought of and listed here, which might help as we seek to return to “indoor” worship, *please do not hesitate to let me know!* We want to do *all* we can to make this as safe, healthy, and trustworthy as we possibly can, for everyone! As always, we place our trust and confidence in our gracious, good, and mighty Lord and Savior, to guide and direct us, to comfort and protect us— *every* day that He gives us life and breath and everything else!

Again I say it: *all of you* are in my thoughts and prayers, especially in these trying times. Continue to stay healthy and safe— physically *and* spiritually— with the strength that our risen, victorious, and also ascended Lord and Savior Jesus alone provides!

Yours in our risen Savior,

Pastor David D. Reichel
 Ascension Ev. Lutheran Church
 Mitchell, South Dakota