

COMMUNION DURING COVID-19

Our County Health officials have stated that our sheltering orders will remain in place until at least April 30. Our pastors and elders are greatly concerned in refraining from receiving the Lord's Supper for such a long time. While the celebration of Holy Communion is not absolutely necessary in times of crises, we feel that if the church has the ability to provide the Sacrament in a responsible way, it should do so.

Our congregation has had a long tradition of serving Holy Communion to our shut-ins. For these dear members, receiving our Lord's Body and Blood not only allows them to commune with Christ, but it also binds them to the Body of Christ, His church, in a very real way. What a blessed gift to those who cannot physically come to church!

In a sense, we are all now shut-ins. We are living sheltered in our homes. Thankfully, we do have permission to go out for essential activities, such as shopping at the grocery store or picking up food from restaurants. Certainly then, if we are able to go through a drive-thru for an evening meal, should we not also be able to drive to church for the Lord's Meal?

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION ON SUNDAY, MARCH 29

This coming Sunday, will once again be worshipping online together at _____ . Afterward, from 11am – 12:30pm, we are inviting our members to drive by the church to receive Holy Communion from its pastors. We will do so, striving both for the safety for our worshipers as well as observing the sacredness of the Sacrament.

Here is how it will work:

- Worshipers will enter the upper parking lot to wait in line for their turn to receive communion. Please keep your windows up until it's your turn to commune.
- There will be 2 Communion Stations, each one staffed by a pastor. When you arrive at a Communion Station, please place your car in park and roll down your windows.
- The pastors will keep 6 feet distance and lead your family through a brief liturgy which will include the Words of Institution.
- We are using individually sealed cups and wafers. Once they are blessed, worshipers will open their communion cups and wafers to receive the Sacrament. Children will receive a blessing.
- The liturgy will close with a brief prayer and benediction. We will have devotional materials on hand for you to take home. You may also drop off your offering.

THOSE WHO MIGHT CHOOSE TO REFRAIN

This unique form of celebrating Communion is meant to strengthen your faith and be a comfort for your soul! However, there may be some who choose to refrain from participating. These will include:

- Anyone who is feeling ill
- Anyone who may have been exposed to someone who has the Corona virus

- Anyone who has traveled outside the United States in the past three weeks
- Anyone who has underlying health issues
- Anyone who may not feel comfortable communing in this way. You have our blessing if you prefer to wait to receive the Lord's Supper at the altar when we are able to worship together again in our sanctuary.

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE CATECHISM

Luther's Small Catechism provides us with good guidance on how to receive the Lord's Supper:

How often are we to receive the Sacrament? Christ has not specified a particular timetable but invites us to come often to this Sacrament on account of the gifts He bestows her and our great need. In the New Testament, the Sacrament was a regular and major feature of the congregational worship, no an occasional extra. This practice continued in the church, and in Reformation times our church celebrated the Sacrament "every Lord's Day and on the other festivals." ("An Explanation of the Small Catechism" p.329)

What is the benefit of this eating and drinking? In the Sacrament, we receive a great treasure: the forgiveness of sins. Our Lord's words assure us that this treasure "is passed along and made our very own" when we receive His body and blood. As Christians, we confess that the forgiveness of sins won by the death of Jesus on the cross is now delivered to us in the body and blood of Christ. This is the most important gift that we can receive. ("An Explanation of the Small Catechism" p.331)

A FINAL NOTE

In this time, we continue to look to Jesus, our Good Shepherd. He has promised to feed us, His sheep! Be assured of God's great love for you in Christ.

"Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it." 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24