

## **CORONA VIRUS UPDATES**

**9-1-2020**

### **OPENING UP FOR INDOOR WORSHIP**

#### **WHEN IS IT SAFE AND WOULD YOU ATTEND AN INDOOR WORSHIP SERVICE?**

We continue to monitor the situation daily and are looking at all the information that we get from health officials and our synod about opening up the church for indoor worship. Guidelines now are that people over 65 and those with health concerns should not attend indoor services. This is a large part of our congregation. We feel it is safe to do the Outdoor Service so will we be abandoning worship for a large segment of our congregation by moving back inside? Should we continue with the Outdoor Service and start in Indoor Service for those who want to attend? **Questions always on our mind are:**

- Is it safe? What are the risks?
- What steps need to be taken to ensure that we are doing things as safely as possible?
- Who will help in taking those steps, each week, as the building is sanitized and ready?

Please let us know what you are thinking. Contact me: Pastor Ken. Or Scott Gresham – our Council President or call Mary at the Church Office.

We are looking at possibly opening up in October. Let us know:

- Would you attend an Indoor Worship service?
- If you currently attend the Outdoor Service would you prefer to continue with that Outdoor Service?
- Would you like to see both an Indoor and Outdoor service offered?
- Would you be willing to help clean and sanitize the building each week as we re-open?

This is a big decision, possibly affecting the health and welfare of many people. At the same time, we don't want to over-react to the situation. Please contact us to let us know what you are thinking.

Peace, Pastor Ken

### **OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICES ARE CONTINUING INTO THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER AT 8:30 AM ON SUNDAY MORNING**

We continue to monitor the situation with the Corona Virus daily as we try to assess when it will be safe for us to resume indoor Worship Services. Our outdoor services can be done safely and efficiently, with a minimum of set-up each week. There are very stringent guidelines for holding services indoor which would require major sanitizing each week while minimizing the amount of activities which could be safely done indoors.

If services were to be held indoors, we would need to exercise extreme caution in the number of people allowed inside, social distancing in the building, and restrict the use of hymnals, bulletins, food and drinks. Most importantly – we would have to restrict indoor gathering to only those people who are under 65 years of age and those who do not have health issues. This would deny worship to the largest part of our membership. All of these things would greatly alter our indoor worship experience. Outdoors – we are able to engage in a meaningful worship experience while gathering safely with our congregation members of all ages and degrees of health. It is the prudent thing to do so that everyone remains safe and healthy.

Please bear with these plans and the leadership of the congregations. If things change for the better, we can always alter plans to reflect changing conditions.

Thank you, Pastor Ken

### **GUIDELINES FOR THE OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICES:**

Worship Services will be at 8:30 am each Sunday because it is getting hotter as we get more into the summer.

Worship Services will continue alternating between both congregations each week. The schedule is: -

- September 6 Eben-Ezer Lutheran
- September 13 Immanuel Lutheran
- September 20 Eben-Ezer Lutheran
- September 27 Immanuel Lutheran

- We will celebrate Holy Communion each week at the Outdoor Worship Services so that communion is celebrated at each congregation, twice a month.
- We have individual, sealed Communion servings which contain a wafer and grape juice. These will be available at worship.
- Bulletins will be available on the Eben-Ezer Website: [www.ebenezerbrenham.com](http://www.ebenezerbrenham.com).
- Everyone is invited to bring a lawn chair, if you would like to sit outside.
- We must maintain proper social distancing with no handshakes or hugging.
- Everyone is required to wear a face mask if you are outside your car.
- Please bring your own hand sanitizer, if you have some.
- We will have a limited number of face masks and hand sanitizer available at church for those who need them.
  - You are encouraged to sit in your car to further distance yourself, especially if you have underlying health or age issues.
- We will have a speaker system set up so that you can hear the service.
- We have an FM transmitter so that you can hear the service on your car radio if you prefer to have your A/C on.
- Restrooms will be available, as needed.
- There will be a place for you to drop your offering as offering plates will not be passed around. • But this service is optional if you do not feel comfortable getting out in public yet.

**WE WILL CONTINUE OUR FACEBOOK WORSHIP SERVICE AT 10:00 AM ON SUNDAY MORNINGS AND OUR RADIO WORSHIP ON KWHI 12.80 AM OR 101.7 FM AT 1:30 PM ON SUNDAY AFTERNOONS.**

We will be reviewing the situation as we go along. We want to err on the side of caution so that everyone is safe! We certainly do not want to expose anyone to the risk of getting infected. I would invite you to keep up with the latest information that we have through our website: [www.ebenezerbrenham.com](http://www.ebenezerbrenham.com) or through our Facebook pages by searching on Facebook for: Eben-Ezer Lutheran Church.

I also have my personal Facebook page which you may access by searching for: Ken Weiss. Each of these platforms is being updated often, as needed. If you, or others, do not have internet access, please read this Newsletter thoroughly and help others to be informed as to the plans for the coming days.

We want to stay in touch with you! Eben-Ezer Lutheran and Immanuel Lutheran have not closed! We have temporarily postponed all activities in order to help stop the spread of this disease. We want everyone to be safe! Please call me if you have needs or concerns. God bless you all! Stay in touch! Let us know how you are doing!

Peace, Pastor Ken

**WEEKLY SUNDAY WORSHIP ON FACEBOOK AT 10:00 AM. GO TO THE EBEN-EZER LUTHERAN CHURCH FACEBOOK PAGE.**

Please join us each Sunday at 10:00 am for a Facebook Worship Service. I will be leading this worship on the Eben-Ezer Lutheran Church Facebook page. This video worship will remain on Facebook so that you may join in this time of worship later, as your schedule permits. There will be a bulletin posted for each Sunday on the Eben-Ezer website: [www.ebenezerbrenham.com](http://www.ebenezerbrenham.com). The service will also be available on my personal Facebook page. Search for: Ken Weiss.

**WORSHIP SERVICE ON KWHI RADIO AT 1:30 PM ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON KWHI RADIO – 12.80 AM AND 101.7 FM**

Our worship service is broadcast on KWHI radio at 1:30 pm on Sunday afternoons through September 20. Please join us for worship and invite others to tune in also, especially those who do not have internet or Facebook access and are not able to watch the Facebook Worship at 10:00 am. There will be a bulletin posted for each Sunday on the Eben-Ezer website: [www.ebenezerbrenham.com](http://www.ebenezerbrenham.com)  
**Beginning on Sunday, September 27th our Radio Service will be broadcast at 5:00 pm each Sunday.** This time change is necessary because of the start of the NFL football season.

## **HOLY COMMUNION ON FACEBOOK WORSHIP AT 10:00 AM AND ON THE RADIO ON KWHI AT 1:30 PM ON THE 2ND AND 4TH SUNDAYS OF THE MONTH**

We are celebrating Holy Communion on both the Facebook Worship at 10:00 am and the Radio Worship on KWHI at 1:30 pm on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month, which is our regular Holy Communion schedule for worship.

If you would like to take Holy Communion, I invite you to have some wine or grape juice and bread or crackers of any kind available. I would also invite you to set up a small worship area in your home. You can do this by placing a cross there if you have one available and also by lighting a candle, if you can do this safely. If not – that is OK. God knows your situation and understands and is present with you in all circumstances.

During the service I will lead the Holy Communion Liturgy and give instructions for celebrating Holy Communion in your home. There will also be a bulletin available on the Eben-Ezer church website if you would like to print that out to follow along with the service. That website is: [www.ebenezerbrenham.com](http://www.ebenezerbrenham.com).

This is very different from what we normally do but we are living in very different times from just a few months ago. It is theologically appropriate and meaningful to celebrate Holy Communion in this manner. However, celebrating Holy Communion is left up to each individual, just as it is when we celebrate Holy Communion in our sanctuary at church.

Peace, Pastor Ken

## **DAILY VIDEO DEVOTIONS ON EBEN-EZER LUTHERAN CHURCH FACEBOOK PAGE**

I am leading a Daily Video Devotion on Facebook each day of the week, Monday through Friday, in the morning. You may find that Video Devotion on the Eben-Ezer Lutheran Church Facebook page and also on my personal Facebook page by searching for: Ken Weiss. There is no set time for this Devotion but it will be available on Facebook throughout the day and beyond.

Peace, Pastor Ken