

Hi Everyone!

I hope you are staying safe and healthy and finding ways to be a blessing to others.

We are going to try to expand some activity here at church, and we need your help and cooperation to do it as safely and responsibly as we can. We will start up **Sunday morning Bible study** between services on **Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> at 9:45-10:30**. We are asking that Bible study participants sanitize the fellowship hall before and after the Bible study. (Tables and chairs will be set up with 4 chairs per table and sanitizing wipes on each table). Please let me know if you would be willing to help organize this task. Masks will be required. We will not have refreshments. We will be studying the book of Hebrews.

We are also going to start **The Gathering** again on Wednesday, **September 16<sup>th</sup>**. We are looking at developing a safe way to serve the meals. Tables will be set up distanced from each other with a maximum of 4 at each table. Sanitizing wipes will be on each table. The meal will be \$5. There will be a sign up sheet in the CMC lobby or you can send me an email or call the church office to reserve your spot for the meal. Contact Shirley Truog if you are able to help with meal prep or serving. The meal will be served at 5:30 and the Bible study will be from 6:00 – 7:00. We will be studying a harmony of the Gospels (studying Mathew, Mark, Luke and John side by side).

We have also been discussing protocols for how we will handle things if a staff member or worshipper tests positive for COVID-19. We hope and pray that will not happen, but we want to have some ideas in place if it does. As always, if you are feeling sick, or if you have been exposed to COVID-19, or if you are in a high risk, vulnerable condition, please stay away from crowds and take appropriate measures to ensure your own safety and the safety of others.

In closing, I want to share with you part of an email I received from Dr. Jerry Kieschnick (former LCMS Synodical President). Pray that this does not happen in our church and pray for the churches where it is happening.

*Pastor Brian Truog*

### **Church Coronavirus Conflict – Dr. Jerry Kieschnick**

Church conflict is a growing pressure point for pastors during the coronavirus pandemic. So says a new report from Religious New Service, based on a July survey by LifeWay Research. Here are excerpts:

When asked about the pressure points they are feeling most, 27% of evangelical and mainline pastors cited maintaining unity and addressing conflict and complaints. Just 8% cited disagreement and conflict as issues in an April survey. Three months matter.

The online responses from 443 evangelical and mainline Protestant pastors appear to be a barometer of the division in the country over the best ways to respond to the pandemic.

“Shutting everything down was a whole lot less complicated than the debates over how to reopen,” said Trevin Wax, a senior vice president at LifeWay. “There’s a sense in which the pastor, in trying to care for the congregation, feels beat up right now.”

He said, “There are people who are shocked and appalled to find out that there are other people in their congregation who have completely different views on the best way to handle a pandemic.”

One pastor said, “My people are in very different places regarding the virus. Some are losing patience and want to get on with normal life with little regard for the potential consequences. Others are still practicing extreme social distancing and are having a tough time understanding others who are not taking this as seriously as they are.”

The second-most-cited “pressure point” was pastoring at a distance, with 17% mentioning it. Thirteen percent cited safety and well-being of their members and 12% mentioned personal exhaustion and isolation as they struggle to keep the people of their congregations unified.

Wax said, “Good pastors feel responsible for maintaining the unity of the church. It’s heartbreaking to read these comments from pastors who feel like a lot of the work they’ve done in preserving the unity of the church seems threatened right now over differences that are really a matter of wisdom and judgment and discernment.”