

**Pastor Michael J. Roth**  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
St. Joseph, Michigan

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July 24, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It has been about 6 weeks since we reinstated in-person worship at Trinity. It has been a blessing to hear the Word and receive the body and blood of Christ together. We were hopeful that conditions related to the coronavirus pandemic would have improved and we could continue life and worship as usual. As you know, we are still in Phase 4 of the pandemic, which requires many restrictions and recommended precautions. Things have not returned to normal and many familiar, comfortable things remain a challenge.

For the time being we will not be making many changes to our worship services. The only exception is we will be adding more singing to our 10:30 service. The 8:00 service will continue as it has been, with only a final hymn. People who wish to worship at 8:00, but are not comfortable with public singing, may leave after communion in this service. For those who are comfortable with public singing and wish to participate in the full liturgical service the 10:30 service will offer this option. Both services will continue to follow the standard protocols of social distancing, masks and sanitization.

Currently, we are not yet ready to bring the Contemporary Service back at 9:15. There are a number of logistical difficulties when it comes to sanitizing the electronic and musical equipment. The gym, with its chairs, stage, and size also presents a challenge. Not to mention, the difficulty with having the Praise Team rehearse and lead worship while social distancing or wearing masks.

We will continue to offer the online worship service released on Facebook and YouTube on Sundays at 10:00. People are also able to follow the services whenever it is convenient by visiting our website, [www.trinitystjoe.org](http://www.trinitystjoe.org).

We are very grateful for your ongoing financial contributions to the ministry of Trinity. I would encourage you to continue in this commendable work. Also, your prayers and positive witness in the community for the sake of the Gospel is a great blessing. Please let any of the church staff know if we can be of assistance to you during this time.

The Lord bless you and keep you in His loving and protective care.

Pastor Roth

**Pastor Michael J. Roth**  
**Trinity Lutheran Church**  
**St. Joseph, Michigan**

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June 5, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

These have been trying times for our nation and the world. They have also been difficult for the Church, including Trinity. Worship is such an important part of who we are as Christians. Although, we can and do worship daily with our lives and time spent in prayer and the Word of God, it is not the same as gathering together in the Lord's house. The opportunity for us to worship in the church is nearly here. Praise the Lord!

Trinity's Church Council appointed a Covid Advisory Committee (CAC) to monitor the information and plan the back-to-church process. We believe that we will be ready to begin in-house worship on Sunday, June 14. Our plan is to start with only two services a week, 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. We will gradually add back the 9:15 a.m. and Wednesday evening services. Until we are back to our full schedule, we will be offering the Lord's Supper in both Sunday morning services.

We understand that not everyone is ready to come back to in-person worship, so we will continue our online worship service on Sunday mornings at 10:00. We encourage those who are showing symptoms or have been in contact with someone testing positive for COVID-19, to worship from home. We also plan to offer the Zoom Bible class at two time slots Sunday morning 9:15 and 11:00. For the time being, we will not have the regular Sunday morning Bible study in the Fellowship Hall or Summer Sunday School.

To accommodate those who are not ready to worship in-person, but desire Holy Communion, we are offering the sacrament by appointment. Beginning June 14<sup>th</sup>, the following times will be available for Holy Communion: Sundays 12:00 – 2:00; Mondays 10:00 – 12:00 and Wednesdays 12:00 – 2:00. Please call Betty (269-470-0745) or the church office (269-983-5000) to schedule an appointment.

Until further notice the church office will not be open, except by appointment. Our staff will be working from home, but are available as needed. Please do not hesitate to call me for hospitalizations, pastoral care and homebound communion visits.

Although we are excited to get life and church back to normal, we know that modifications are necessary. Please review the accompanying document to understand the procedures the CAC outlined as we open again.

Thank you for your patience and understanding. Please pray for Trinity and her members.

The Lord keep you in His loving and protective care,

Pastor Roth

## **THE REOPENING OF THE CHURCH BUILDING FOR WORSHIP SERVICES**

- a) As the time of reopening continues, we look forward to worshipping together again. We have tried to balance the viewpoint of an enthusiastic return while being conscientious of those who may have anxiety over the continued risk to everyone's health.
- b) Our Committee has been very mindful of health needs and issues. We have prepared the church for your arrival and for you to enjoy a clean, safe, non-touch worship experience.
- c) Beginning on June 14<sup>th</sup>, we will phase in our worship services starting with 8:00 am and 10:30 am.
- d) Contemporary worship services will begin in the near future.
- e) So that we might follow social distancing practices for everyone, we will not have a nursery or a fellowship time.
- f) Face masks are strongly encouraged, but optional. If you do not have a mask, we will have some available to share with you.
- g) Hand Sanitizing stations are located at each entrance to the church and in the Welcome Center (located on the desk and by the coffee machine).
- h) We ask that as you enter church and see other friends that you continue practicing six feet of social distance.
- i) As much as we would like to greet everyone with a warm hug and a hearty handshake, we ask you refrain from doing so and also we will suspend the greeting of peace.
- j) We ask that you go straight into church and be seated and that you leave soon after the worship service is over. Also work to maintain six feet of social distance in the parking lot.

### **WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONTINUE ATTENDING THE ON-LINE WORSHIP SERVICE:**

- a. If you are uncomfortable and have anxiety about being around other people.
- b. Out of love for others, anyone who is sick especially with a fever, shortness of breath and/or cough should stay home.
- c. Please stay home if you have or may have been exposed to anyone with the coronavirus in the last 14 days or have cared for anyone who has been exposed in the last 14 days.
- d. If you have been out of the country in the last 14 days, we ask that you stay home.
- e. For anyone who chooses to stay home, we will continue to make services available on both Facebook & our website.

## **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT WHEN YOU ATTEND THE IN-PERSON SERVICE:**

- a) All four doors to the church will be available for entrance to aid social distancing.
- b) The service will be projected so hymnals and bulletins are not necessary right now. All Bibles and hymnals have been removed from the pews.
- c) A few large print bulletins will be available for only those with vision difficulty. These will be at the entrances for you to pick up.
- d) We will use every third pew to create appropriate distancing.
- e) We encourage the first to arrive to sit in the front.
- f) Offering baskets will not be passed, but will be located by each exit. The Givelify app and Excel in Giving methods are both wonderful ways to donate to the church.
- g) Communion will be available in every worship service for the time being.
  - a. Communion has been set up using great care. Our Altar Guild is using masks & gloves throughout.
  - b. Communion Assistants also will have sanitized their hands and be wearing masks.
  - c. Communion will be the continuous line at the front two stations. There will be no distribution at the communion rail.
  - d. The ushers will dismiss the pews for communion to maintain the social distance.
  - e. The Communion Assistant will drop the wafer into your hand, using care not to touch your hand.
  - f. The Communion wine/juice will only be available in individual cups spaced apart. We ask that you are careful to avoid touching more than one cup.
- h) For the time being, ushers will dismiss us by pew at the end of the service. We ask that everyone exit the building promptly.
- i) As with our worship services, singing will be phased in as more information is studied about congregational participation. In the first few services, we will sing the closing hymn. Anyone uncomfortable with congregational singing may exit after communion.