

Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
May 6, 2020

"SPACED OUT"

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!" Psalm 122:1

That day is fast approaching, the day in which we get to come together again, here in OUR "house of the Lord", to step out of space and time as the world knows it and into the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. This Sunday, the 10th of May (also Mother's Day) we get to do just that as our Savior comes to us in Word and Sacrament to be present with us and offer His gifts of forgiveness and salvation. For me, it has been since Sunday March 8th, our outdoor worship service, that I have not seen most of you. We left the very next morning for our tour of Israel. I have longed for this day ever since, and now it's almost here. As we gather this Sunday morning it isn't quite going to be "business as usual" due to the fact that the coronavirus, and its resulting Covid-19 illness, are still out there. We'll be limiting the number of people in each worship service and trying our best to maintain a six foot or more "social distance" between us. Remember, we'll have TWO worship services for the next few to several weeks, at 8:30 and 10:30am. We'll need to space ourselves out in these time periods so as not to exceed the limit of less than 40 people here at one time. As statistics show from the past our breakdown of attendance is usually about 40% of us here at 8:30am and roughly 60% at 10:30am. That means that there is the potential for us to fill up the later worship time, and I'd hate to see anyone turned away...especially visitors who tend to arrive just before the service begins. So, I ask those who can to consider coming at 8:30am to minimize the potential for that to happen. Once you are in the building, we will be blocking off every other row of seats in order to insure proper spacing. Bulletins will be laid out chairs for you, your spouse and children (wouldn't that be great?) to help make sure that we don't all get too close together. During the distribution of the Lord's Supper...yes, we're are having communion this Sunday...we'll have worshipers come forward in family units, not an entire row at a time. Also, the common cup will not be used for the time being. Yes, there will be some inconveniences for now, but we want to be responsible citizens of our state and nation as well as of the Kingdom of God. Yes, for now, there will be a few changes, and we all know how much Lutherans resist change, but they're for the common good. As time marches on "this too shall pass" and we will gradually return to a worship experience that more closely resembles what it was before. What we MUST remember in all of this though, is that in worship it's NOT all about us. It's all about our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the center of everything that happens...in the service and in all of our life. He is the object and subject of our worship. What He has done for us and what He gives to us is of first importance. As we come this Sunday, and every Sunday, we come for an experience that you can't find anywhere else in this world. We come not to be entertained but to be gathered with all the saints, here on earth and in heaven, around the throne of the King, to see Him, to hear Him, to experience Him and to be fed by Him. We come to be comforted by Him, inspired by Him, empowered by Him, and emboldened by Him to go then and re-enter the sinful dying world with the words of eternal life. Yes! I am so glad that we can once again "go to the house of the Lord". I so look forward to seeing you and spending time together with you at the feet of Jesus. Our time of exile has been seven weeks, the last on site service held here was Sunday March 15th. Our last online only service was this past Sunday the 3rd of May. That's just over 40 days. In Scripture the number 40 is representative of a period of trial and testing. That period now appears to be ending and our Deliverer, our living Redeemer, is coming to meet with us in just a few days. Together again we can shout for joy; "Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!" And for the first time since last Easter Season we'll be able to hear one another as we make that joyous proclamation to the world. It's going to be pretty cool!