

Pastor Brian's  
Mid Week Message  
April 15, 2020

**“GRAND REOPENING?”**

*Let us not neglect meeting together, as some have made a habit, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:25*

“Reopening the country”, these seem to be the coronavirus buzzwords of the week. We’re now being told that the pandemic as it relates to our nation is plateauing (is that a word? I’ve never tried to use plateau as a verb before). The number of new cases and hospitalizations is on the decrease in many areas. That’s great news, but there still are new cases being reported and new hospitalizations, and there will be more deaths attributed to this virus. So now the focus is shifting to when we can climb out of our bunkers, our homes, and safely start putting life back together again to at least approach what it was before. That means reopening schools, reopening “non-essential” businesses, reopening restaurants to on site dining, and most important to us (at least I want to believe so) reopening our church to allow us to gather in worship face to face rather than Facebook to Facebook. I’ll say it right here and now...I HAVE NO IDEA when that will take place. We will be paying very close attention to what our governmental leaders and health experts have to say regarding when it’s sufficiently safe to do so. I believe we’re still at least a couple of weeks away, but that’s just an estimate based on today’s reality. In this time of forced separation of our fellowship I have to say that I think we have been very successful in continuing to worship together and in maintaining our structure and the integrity of the worship services. As of this morning we have had 363 Facebook views of our Easter Sunday service from 328 different internet addresses. Many of you watch as couples so who even knows how many people have been reached. I would conservatively estimate over 400! That’s incredible...more than 400 people have heard the truth of Jesus’ bodily resurrection that justifies us before God our Father and guarantees our resurrection to eternal life by faith in Christ’s completed work on our behalf. In the past few days, I have had the opportunity to take in the Easter worship from some other Lutheran Churches, both nearby and afar, and I’m a bit saddened to say that not all of our churches can say the same thing. Some have used elaborate video production and editing to “wow” the worshiper but in doing so have lost some of the meaning and intimacy of worship, at least that’s one man’s opinion. Going forward I long for the time to come that we can all be together in one building, one room, to experience the presence of Jesus in Word and Sacrament and to sing our praises to God our Father through Him. I eagerly await being able to bring our prayers before the Lord as many gathered together to become one body, and to bring forth our tithes and offerings to God, and then receive His blessing as we go from this one place outward into the community. God tells us not to neglect the fellowship, meeting together, and to use our fellowship to encourage one another in the faith (Hebrews 10:25 above). Our online worship has been a blessing to us in this very strange time but must never replace our physical togetherness and the ability to touch one another, physically as well as spiritually and emotionally. Jesus Himself even reached out and touched the sick, lepers, even the dead. You just didn’t do that in His time! I’m hearing some who say that the handshake and the hug are now things of the past. I pray that is not the case! I look forward to the day, and pray that it comes soon, that we can get back to being the people of God in a collective environment as well as individually and as families. That we can do so safely and confidently empowered by our risen and living Savior. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Pastor Brian