

# St. Peter Lutheran Church

## Revised Guidance for Returning to Worship May 2021

*Psalm 95:6 - Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!*

*Psalm 118:24 - This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

Just over a year ago, the Board of Elders adjusted certain practices of the Divine Service in response to the ongoing pandemic. These changes (which were intended to be temporary) were enacted to limit physical contact and ensure social distancing. After monthly review of generally improving virus statistics, availability and acceptance of vaccines and testing, CDC and health official guidance, updated information on the decreased likelihood of virus transmission from surfaces, seasonal timing and member input, the Board has decided to restore our prior practices beginning June 1; while respecting individual considerations.

Over the period of greatest impact, we managed to continue with live-streamed services, then in-person services with modified personal contact and proximity. Many of these adjustments, while necessary for social distancing and reduced contact, came with detrimental effects to worship, including some disruption of the proper practice and flow of the Divine Service, a reduction in Christian fellowship, undue effect on proper reverence and table approach to Holy Communion and the inability to shepherd the entire flock based on attendance. We believe now is the right time to return to our prior practices and in turn follow the Divine Service as intended.

### Updated practices:

- We will once again receive Holy Communion by table as we previously did. This will include the option of receiving the Common Cup for those who prefer.
- The Friendship Pads will be passed to assist us in recording attendance.
- The Offering will be collected during the service as before with the Offertory.
- We will continue the live stream as a last-resort option to hear the Word.

We ask that everyone continue to maintain self-responsibility and treat each other with kindness and grace, as we each have different health risks, opinions, and concerns. If you feel that you need to wear a mask or use hand sanitizer to protect yourself, please feel free to do so. If you do not feel well, take care of yourself, and consider deferring attendance for the safety of your neighbor. As always, if you cannot participate in the traditional practice, please reach out to our Pastors so they can ensure that you receive Holy Communion.

Obviously, things may still be different between individuals, as with anywhere. We each may still find ourselves unsure of how others want to interact. Is it ok to shake this person's hand? Give a hug? Sit close? There's probably no perfect formula, but as with elsewhere, be mindful of your neighbor. If you prefer reduced interaction, please don't hesitate to say that you're being extra careful. If you don't need restrictions, watch for the visual and verbal cues from those you interact with.

If you have questions, concerns or need assistance as we return to our normal worship practices please bring them to the attention to one of the Elders or call the church office and leave a message for the Elders. We are commissioned to ensure proper order of services and provide spiritual care. Let us help as best possible to ensure that you receive that care.

Thank you for your continued prayers for your church and all our members.

The Board of Elders  
St. Peter Lutheran Church

Patrick Bates, Brian Beckrow, Jim Bluemer, Jim Dempsey, Gary Hahn, George Hilbrandt, Bart Hubbell, Andy Neuenfeldt, Joel Wardin

*John 4:23 - But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.*

*Colossians 3:14-17 - And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*